Developing Leaders of Character at the U.S. Air Force Academy

From "First Contact" to Commissioning

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Final Report

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Prepared For

The Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR)

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I. Executive Summary

The public's imagination always has been captivated by the United States Air Force (USAF). Recently, USAF air and space superiority in the Balkans and in Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom has once again demonstrated the global vigilance, reach, and power of USAF. USAF, however, is about more than just technology—its machines and systems. Fundamentally, USAF is about the men and women who operate and support its technology and those who lead its airmen. Effective leadership, more often than technology, is the deciding factor in conflict.

USAF leaders primarily have been educated and trained to maximize their technological edge in the context of conventional warfare. To ensure future successes, however, USAF must anticipate the leadership requirements of a 21st-century global expeditionary Air Force and identify the attributes those future leaders will need. USAF must not only develop in its officer candidates and officers an understanding and appreciation for the technological might they wield, but it must provide them with the skills to inspire their subordinates to get the job done as missions shift from conventional warfare to stability and support operations, the global war on terrorism, and contingency or expeditionary operations.

Since it was established in 1954, the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) has graduated more than 35,000 officers to lead USAF. More than half of USAFA's graduates are still on active duty, and more than 300 of its former cadets have become general officers—some even Air Force Chiefs of Staff. USAFA has a proud history of producing officers with integrity who have put service before self and made excellence a way of life.

From time to time, the proud tradition of USAFA has been tarnished by the misconduct of a few. In January of 2003, Dr. James D. Roche, then Secretary of the Air Force (SAF), received information that there was a significant sexual assault problem at USAFA. Allegedly, the Academy's leadership had ignored the problem. The reactions of the SAF and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force (CSAF), Gen. John Jumper, were swift and comprehensive.

Dr. Roche immediately directed the General Counsel of the Air Force to investigate the allegations and to review the policies, programs, and practices at USAFA keeping in mind the goal of the Academy to develop leaders of character. He also directed the Air Force Inspector General to look into and review the allegations. On March 26, 2003, while those investigations were pending, Dr. Roche and Gen. Jumper issued their *Agenda for Change*.

The purpose of the *Agenda for Change* was, among other things, to ensure that USAFA cadets would be trained as leaders of character. It refocused education and training to emphasize fair treatment and mutual respect. The *Agenda for Change* required leadership and involvement at all levels of USAF and USAFA to oversee and encourage the development of cadets consistent with USAF core values of integrity, service before self, and excellence.

Subsequently, the Superintendent, the Commandant, and other senior leaders at USAFA were replaced. When the new leadership arrived at USAFA, they discovered that beneath the sexual

assault problems were deeper cultural problems where, for example, loyalty to peers eclipsed loyalty to the institution's core values, where many youth did not see the importance of serving their country and all too often lacked role models or moral anchors. To address those concerns, the new USAFA leadership modified the cadet development paradigm to better deal with societal changes and the evolving nature of conflict and to place more emphasis on character throughout the officer development process. To execute this new paradigm, USAFA leadership replaced the Academy Training Philosophy and its accompanying Fourth Class System with an Officer Development System (ODS) and Four Class System (FCS) that emphasize character and leadership development across all four years of the Academy experience.

The changes initiated by the SAF and the CSAF through the new USAFA leadership are grounded, among other things, in the recognition that the increasing operations tempo of a global expeditionary Air Force and the complexity of the tactical environment in which young officers will find themselves will require quick, incisive decisions that may have significant ethical implications. The new ODS and its FCS were designed and implemented to better prepare young officers to lead Airmen in increasingly complex and ambiguous circumstances where seemingly routine tactical decisions can have wide-ranging strategic consequences: a pilot's decision to drop bombs in close air support while avoiding collateral damage; balancing the needs of Airmen with the needs of the mission; or even maintenance readiness decisions in the face of urgent mission demands.

The Challenge

The challenge ahead is for USAFA to ensure that its policies, programs, and practices will sustain a culture of character within which to develop tomorrow's leaders of character. This starts with expectations and values that are clearly articulated, well understood, consistently modeled, and developed and reinforced. Role modeling, coaching, and mentoring are particularly important to this process. Any disconnect between rhetoric and behavior will erode the culture of character, cause cynicism, and undermine the process of cadet development.

The development of sound moral behavior and mature ethical reasoning is a challenge that entails continuous feedback and requires ongoing assessment. Within a culture of character, there must be an environment that encourages and supports development. Knowing right from wrong is more than the simple process of being aware of the social rules. But character development is not a simple matter of putting those rules into practice. The contexts in which cadets, and subsequently young officers, will find themselves are not fixed, and they do not always lend themselves to formulaic ways of responding. Assessing and evaluating what is morally right entails judgment. Developing the ability to make sound and moral judgments is at the heart of the Academy's mission. That is the true challenge to character development at the USAFA—to provide cadets with learning and development that lasts. To do that, USAFA must clarify the expectations of what its cadets will need for success in the new global environment.

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USAFA must address difficult questions such as

- What should cadets learn and junior officers know and be able to use?

- How does USAFA develop these attributes and abilities?

- Are the Academy's cadets and graduates achieving at the level expected by USAF and USAFA?

- How does USAFA define and foster cadet identity formation and character development, as well as the sense of purpose needed by young officers to become professionally responsible for carrying out the country's national defense objectives?

Regardless of the situation in which cadets or young officers find themselves, they must have both good character and the ability to apply their character-based judgments. This report is designed to help USAF and USAFA ensure that its graduates are imbued with sufficient competence *and* character, and that they can envision a personal future of contributing to the shared values of the USAF and the Nation. The success of USAFA in developing the identity of cadets as leaders of character is fundamental to its vision and mission.

Understanding character, let alone facilitating the development of good character, is an enormous task. In everyday language, the term *character* commonly refers to the tendency to act in ways that are consistent with what one understands to be morally right. A person of good character is someone who attends to the moral implications of actions and who acts in accordance with what is moral in all but the most extreme circumstances. This everyday usage of the term character captures an important feature of what is ordinarily meant by a "good person," but it is an inadequate definition for use in ODS and across USAFA's academic, military, and educational programs.

Character is "an individual's set of psychological characteristics that influence a person's ability and inclination to function morally." Character comprises those traits that lead a person to "do the right thing … or not do the right thing." Marvin Berkowitz, a former USAFA professor, describes a "moral anatomy" that makes up a completely moral person. This moral anatomy consists of moral behavior, moral values, moral personality, moral emotion, moral reasoning, moral identity, and "foundational characteristics."[1] His definition gets at the more complicated nature of character and highlights the immensity of any undertaking to develop character.

One's character is not static. Rather, it is subject to environmental and social influence and is shaped over time by experiences and through learning what traits and behaviors are useful in achieving goals. The challenge for USAFA is to understand how these notions of character map onto actual human psychology and what aspects of the educative process can positively contribute to the formation of good character and ensure moral action.

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[1] The ideas in this paragraph come primarily from Marvin Berkowitz, "The Science of Character Education," in W. Damon (ed.), *Bringing in a New Era in Character Education* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institute Press, 2002).

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To get a better understanding of how the policies, programs, and practices at USAFA impact the officer development process, the SAF and the CSAF through the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MR) engaged ANSER, a public-service research institute and not-for-profit corporation, to provide a comprehensive review of how cadets are developed into officers and leaders of character. To that end, ANSER was asked to examine how USAFA

- Determines the commissioning suitability of cadets

- Executes the Officer Development System and the Four Class System

- Evaluates character in the admissions process

In connection with that examination, ANSER was also asked to investigate the possible application of psychological instruments to the overall process and, where appropriate, make recommendations for the use of specific instruments.

To respond to those tasks, ANSER

- Aggregated a team of experts (the "Team") from within and outside ANSER whose expertise involves military strategy, military history, military operations, leadership, psychology of behavior, psychological testing, adult learning theory and character development, spirituality, law, and ethics

- Conducted a comprehensive review of the relevant literature on character and leadership development

- Spent extensive onsite time at USAFA experiencing the environment and culture firsthand, including participation in the Center for Character Development seminars for each cadet year group

- Conducted extensive interviews and discussions regarding all aspects of the officer development processes with cadets, faculty, coaches, chaplains, AOCs, returning graduates, operational AF members, congressional offices, ALOs, HQ/AF, businesses, other educational institutions, religious school programs, and a variety of subject matter experts

- Conducted a thorough review of the systems, procedures, experiences, and best practices of the other military academies as a point of comparison

- Examined recent character-related problems

- Analyzed and synthesized data into findings and recommendations

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Findings

Following eight months of extensive research and devoting considerable time to examining the admissions process, the officer development systems, and the measures of commissioning suitability, ANSER's Team of experts reached several significant findings:

- There is not a close working relationship or significant collaboration between USAFA and the operational Air Force around the goal of educating and developing leaders of character.

- There is not a common understanding of character and its attributes across commissioning sources and within USAF.

- Character is not sufficiently emphasized when marketing to, recruiting, and selecting applicants to USAFA.

- The character dimensions of cadet life (spiritual, ethical, social) are not developed and emphasized to the same degree as the competence dimensions (intellectual, professional, physical).

- There is insufficient coordination and integration of developmental experiences across the academic, military, and athletic programs at USAFA.

- There are no tools to improve cadet ownership of their development and make meaning of their developmental experiences at USAFA.

- There are not clearly defined or described requirements for determining commissioning suitability across accession sources, particularly with respect to character dimensions.

Recommendations

The ANSER Team looked for best practices and practical ideas during its examination of USAFA to address the concerns raised by its findings. The following recommendations suggest actions ANSER believes USAF and USAFA can take as a means to transforming its officer development process to better prepare its graduates as leaders of character. A more detailed discussion of these recommendations and an action plan are provided in Annex 2.

Significant Study Team Recommendations are

- **Establish USAFA as the "Air *Force's* Academy."** Establish closer ties among USAFA, the operational Air Force, and all commissioning sources to collaboratively improve leadership and character development.

- **Create a "picture" of character that clearly describes what the Academy expects for applicant selection, cadet development, and commissioning suitability.** Define and describe character and its behavioral components consistently for admissions, pre-commissioning programs, and determining commissioning suitability.

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- **Build leaders of character starting from the first contact with an applicant.** Begin conditioning candidates to the importance of character through marketing material and the admissions process, particularly during the period between acceptance and arrival at the Academy.

- **Establish USAFA as a military academy that also grants a degree rather than a university that has a military program.** Better balance programs and accountability for character development with those in place to develop competency.

- **Create a staff and faculty who are not only experts in their discipline, but are experts at developing leaders of character.** Recruit, select, train, and educate the best staff and faculty to role model, coach, and mentor cadets to be leaders of character.

- **Integrate learning, development, and performance across the academic, military, and physical programs.** Establish an integrated and coordinated 47-month character and leadership development program across the Academy's mission elements to address the six dimensions of cadet life and to inculcate the three core values and four attributes of a USAF officer.

- **Establish a Provost (Deputy Superintendent) to serve as the institution's chief operations officer responsible for executing the Superintendent's vision for USAFA consistent with the direction of the CSAF.**

- **Properly resource the Plans Division at USAFA to manage the ODS integration efforts across mission elements.**

- **Provide cadets with tools to help them take ownership of their own leadership and character development.** Require creation and maintenance of a Professional Development Portfolio that incorporates, among other things, an Individual Leader Development Plan to ensure that cadets make meaningful use of their experiences across four years at USAFA.

- **Establish clearly defined and described standards for determining commissioning suitability for each commissioning source.** Clearly describe commissioning suitability as an operational concept, as well as its components and the manner in which the components are developed and measured.

Report Organization
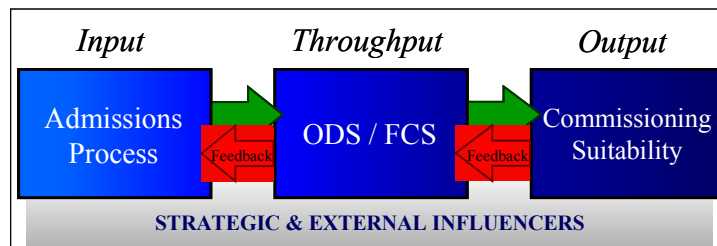
Figure 1: Focus Areas of the Study

Figure 1 shows the framework around which the Team's report is organized. The Report is divided into nine sections. Section II, the introduction, sets out the conceptual background for the report as a whole. Section III outlines history relevant to the study. Section IV explains the report's methodology. Section V addresses external forces that influence institutional transformation at USAFA and how those influences frame strategic considerations. Section VI introduces the admissions process (input) and discusses the process of congressional nominations, the roles of Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs), and the Academy's Admission Office in selecting and pre-conditioning applicants regarding the importance of character at the Academy. Section VII examines the officer development processes and the four class systems (throughput) at USAFA. Section VIII addresses the concept of commissioning suitability (output). Section IX examines the utility of psychological instruments in the admissions process, in measuring cadet development, and in determining suitability for commissioning.

As a further aid to the readers, we provide a series of annexes that support our findings and recommendations, including a specific action plan by which to implement recommendations.

Conclusion

The Academy has made commendable progress in the past year changing to a new officer development system. However, if the shared vision of the SAF, the CSAF, and the SAF/MR of a transformed institution is to be realized, it will require more than mere change or restructuring at the Academy. At the institutional level, transformation must be intentional, institution wide, deep, dynamic, and pervasive. That transfer will require careful guidance and time. The ANSER Team confidently sets forth this report to help the Academy better accomplish its mission to transform the Academy and to graduate lieutenants of character to lead the world's greatest air and space force.

> Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired and success achieved.

> —Cicero (106–43 BC)

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II. Introduction

> A military leader must inspire others to accomplish the mission despite inconvenience, self-sacrifice and, often, life-threatening danger. Character inspires. Officers without character cannot be truly effective leaders. Thus, the mission of our Academy: To graduate lieutenants of character to lead the world's greatest air and space force.
>
> —Lt Gen John W. Rosa[2]

The present USAFA Superintendent has established a vision and mission for the Academy that centers on developing character. Character development is not a simple matter, however. An individual's character develops over time and is formed in many ways before arrival at the Academy. Once there, character is developed through several means. One way is through exposure to the actions and attitudes of others, particularly senior cadets, staff, and faculty. Another is through engaging in moral action. A third is through open, considered dialogue about the complexities of moral situations and alternative responses. With the adoption of the Officer Development System (ODS) and Four Class System (FCS), the Academy has attempted to synchronize and integrate these methods of development over a 47-month experience.

The essential challenge for the Academy is to encourage cadets to grow as moral beings and to equip them with the internal resources to act effectively on that desire. It's not enough to ask cadets to become polite and law-abiding. The Academy also needs to help them develop

- A deep regard for themselves and for others

- An abiding commitment to the core values of integrity, service before self, and excellence

- The resolve to live by and speak up for what they believe while also hearing, understanding, and accommodating the beliefs of others

Our Study is designed to help the Academy with this enormous task.

In 1992, the Academy faced a cheating scandal. The Academy took steps at that time to improve the focus on character. Among other responses, the Commandant established a fitness review board to determine commissioning suitability. He felt that competence, while necessary for commissioning, was not a sufficient measure of commissioning suitability unless accompanied by a character assessment. The Center for Character Development was created to provide character development programs that would supplement the apparent lack of emphasis on character. Other initiatives were started to encourage a more developmental approach to

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[2] ODS pamphlet, p. 1

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character and leadership development. For a variety of reasons, those change efforts did not endure.[3]

Ten years later, the Academy leadership discovered cultural problems that detracted from its mission of developing leaders of character. Once again, the Academy is undergoing organizational change to focus on character. The *Agenda for Change* resulted in the FCS, a developmental model to replace the Fourth-Class System, an attrition-based model. The new leadership constitutes a "guiding coalition"[4] that is committed to using the ODS framework to facilitate institutional change. The two most significant factors differentiating current efforts at transformation from those taken in 1992 are a new character and leadership development model and committed senior leadership.

The Team was asked to assist the Academy in determining whether its character and leadership development programs work. Specifically, we were asked whether the existing programs engage and inspire students' hearts as well as their minds. Do the admissions process, the ODS, and FCS enlist applicants and cadets as active, influential participants in creating an experience that facilitates the development of leaders of character? Is the Academy a microcosm in which cadets practice age-appropriate versions of the roles they must assume in the operational Air Force— and deal with the related problems and complications? Is there a culture of character at the Academy?

> Character is like umpiring—when you do a good job, no one notices.
>
> —Dr. James Toner, Air University faculty

In commissioning this Study, the Air Force recognizes that the goals and values the Academy professes must be embodied in what it does, and that its policies and procedures must reflect the values its cadets are obliged to embrace. Its discipline policies must be legal and fair. Its resources must be equitably deployed. It must ensure that the broadest spectrum of accomplishments is honored, so that not only the most academically and athletically gifted students are recognized for their contributions.

To arrive at our findings and recommendations, and in recognition of the efforts that will extend beyond this report, we examined the Academy's processes and programs from admissions through graduation. We assessed whether they engage cadets in honest, thoughtful discussion and reflection about the moral implications of what they perceive, what they are told, and what they experience. Essentially, does the experience at the Academy provide sufficient opportunities for cadets to talk about, consider, and practice social and ethical behavior in a context that will enable them to arrive at a clearer, stronger sense of the fundamental meaning of "leader of character"?

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[3] "Genesis and Evolution of the United States Air Force Academy Officer Development System," Lt. Col. Paul Price, USAF, April 15, 2004.

[4] Kotter, *Leading Change*, p. 57.

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Purpose of the Study

ANSER's specific taskings arose from gaps identified by a 2004 Air Force General Counsel working group's review of the Academy's policies, programs, and practices, "The Report of the Working Group Concerning the Deterrence of and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the Air Force Academy." The Academy's sexual assault scandal prompted questions about character development at USAFA from a variety of sources. ANSER was commissioned by the SAF and CSAF to provide a comprehensive review of how cadets are developed into officers at the Air Force Academy by examining commissioning suitability, determining the implementation of ODS and FCS, evaluating how applicant character is assessed during the admissions process, and exploring the incorporation of psychological instruments within the officer development process.

The Study Team was tasked to make findings and recommendations and to provide an executable plan to resolve any problems identified. ANSER also was asked to determine the extent to which findings and recommendations for USAFA can be applied to other Air Force commissioning sources, such as the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and Officer Training School (OTS).

The study's overall conclusion is that USAFA has overemphasized the competence dimensions of cadet life (intellectual, professional, and physical) and underemphasized the character dimensions of cadet life (spiritual, ethical, and social).

Before addressing the specific findings in each section of this report, we first explain the conceptual frameworks used. We then describe the common themes and issues we found during our Study.

Guiding Principles and Themes

Guiding Principles

Distilling the research and data, we have concluded that there are fundamental guiding principles and essential components for effective character and leadership development programs. These include the following principles (see Annex 10):

- Define and describe character and its behavioral components.

- Create the conditions to support individual leadership and character development.

- Recruit, select, and educate all who come into contact with and who will be rendering judgments on cadets' character.

- Establish assessment criteria that are legal, fair, and consistent regarding character.

These principles helped us to frame the general recommendation in each study area listed below.

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Strategic Level

- Create the conditions that will attract the highest-quality staff and faculty, with operational and leadership experience, to serve as role models.

- Define and describe character, its behavioral components, and standards of commissioning suitability across all commissioning sources.

- Create operational Air Force developmental experiences that are tied to ODS frameworks—this will require significant partnering between USAF and USAFA.

- Create a climate of clear expectations at USAFA that supports and promotes the long-term transformational process.

Admissions

- Emphasize character with as much importance as academics, athletics, and extracurricular activities in the application and admissions processes.

- Define and describe character in behavioral terms to assist those rendering judgments about character in the application process.

- Set the expectations and condition the candidates about the importance of character before their arrival at USAFA.

- Harmonize the character-assessment abilities of Academy Liaison Officers (ALOs), congressional panels, and references.

- Train, educate, and develop those involved in evaluating character.

ODS/FCS

- Balance competency dimensions with character dimensions in determining Order of Merit List standing.

- Create a common definition and description of character in behavioral terms.

- Improve and sustain integrated and synchronized character development programs and metrics to evaluate those programs and to provide cadets with feedback.

- Improve AOCs, staff, and faculty professional training to effectively enhance their character and leadership development skills.

- Hold cadets, staff, and faculty accountable for ownership of their responsibilities in leader of character.

- Set the conditions to allow cadets operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing. Allow cadets to execute the Commander's Intent within the boundaries set by the Commandant and coached and mentored by the staff and faculty.

- Rebalance incentives and punishments to shape individual cadet development.

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Commissioning Suitability

- Recognize that commissioning suitability is a *complex summary judgment* based on objective and subjective measures.

- Define and describe character along with its behavioral components to provide sufficient objective and subjective measures by which to determine commissioning suitability.

- Give AOCs primary responsibility to develop and assess cadets as leaders of character. Ensure that they are adequately prepared for this responsibility.

- Establish assessment criteria that are legal and fair by which to measure one's character for commissioning suitability.

Psychological Instruments

- Acknowledge that there are no suitable instruments to assess or predict the capacity for character development that can or should be used in admissions screening.

- Incorporate the use of instruments recommended by the Study Team that can measure cadet progress in character development over the 47-month Academy experience.

- Recognize that there are no instruments suitable *by themselves* to objectively assess or predict character. Use recommended assessment tools to measure progress in character development to augment this largely subjective assessment.

Keeping in mind these major themes, the remainder of the report provides the findings, discussions, and recommendations in each study area. The recommendations are intentionally succinct, with a detailed action plan in Annex 2.

II. Introduction

III. History Relevant to the Study

Since its inception, character has been emphasized consistently by the Academy as both a determinant for admissions and a requirement for graduation. In recent years, however, this emphasis was eroded, to the detriment of the Academy and the cadets. Character has now reemerged as a focus of the educational experience as leadership moves toward integrating learning, development, and performance across the Academy's academic, military, and physical programs. The Team found the following history relevant to our understanding of the problems confronting the Academy.

As planning for the Air Force Academy began in 1949, the Air Force Academy Planning Board emphasized that the admissions process should target positive character traits in potential cadets in addition to academic and physical requirements. Over time there have been minor modifications to the admissions process; however, its overall structure has remained the same.

Emphasis on character in the admissions process changed significantly. When the Academy was established in 1955, its founders recognized the importance of character in developing leaders, and, over time, the Academy leadership has made changes to maintain an emphasis on character. Character has not been a key factor in cadet selection in recent years.

The Honor Code was the first tool used by the Academy to institutionalize this emphasis on character.[5] Though some aspects of the Honor Code are continually reviewed and modified to meet the demands of a fluid environment, its core concepts remain largely unchanged. Where changes *have* occurred, however, they have created significant challenges to the Academy's overall integrity.

In 1993, the Academy formed a Leadership Education and Training (LEAD) Team with the mission to identify the institutional practices that were fostering a climate of harassment of newly admitted female cadets, and to "create a systematic approach to building leaders of character at USAFA."[6] The LEAD Team's recommendations focused on overhauling the Academy's cadet development system and, specifically, on the roles and responsibilities of the upper-class cadets in developing character in subordinates.

Early achievements were made as a result of the LEAD Team's recommendations, but many of the LEAD Team initiatives did not sustain their initial momentum. Again in 2003, character issues precipitated publication of the *Agenda for Change* in an attempt to change the culture at the Academy. The publication of the *Agenda for Change* resulted in the Academy's adoption of the FCS and ODS and a renewed emphasis on character.

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[5] http://www.USAFA.af.mil/ncls/student_information.html#honor.

[6] LEAD Report Introduction.

III. History Relevant to the Study

Where the Academy's previous Fourth-Class System relied heavily on rewards and punishments to meet training, educational, and behavioral goals, the current FCS emphasizes modeling, coaching, and mentoring to facilitate positive behaviors.

"We found a Cold War institution in an expeditionary world."
—Lt Gen Rosa,
March 2005

Sexual assault and harassment were not the only "red flags" at the Academy. Upon the 2003 arrival of a new Commandant and Superintendent — Brig Gen Weida and Lt Gen Rosa, respectively— the underlying problems in the cadet culture (such as low cadet morale, mistrust of the Honor System, and cadet misconduct) quickly became a focal point of discussion.

Graduation from USAFA is not only contingent upon fulfillment of academic curriculum, but also upon a cadet's ability "to demonstrate an aptitude for commissioned service and leadership, be satisfactory in conduct, and be proficient in physical education and military training."[7] These conditions are assessed through both objective and subjective measures, and, as a result, the assessment of cadet commissioning suitability has created significant debate.

In 1994 the Commandant, then Brig Gen Gamble, issued a memorandum for the Cadet Wing entitled "Improvements—Aptitude for Commissioned Service Evaluation System." The memorandum stated that senior leadership did not believe that the Military Performance Average[8] was a reliable and effective tool in assessing cadets' aptitude for commissioning. In an attempt to create a better assessment process, Gamble established an "Officer Aptitude Screening Board" (OASB) comprising active-duty officers who would conduct a "whole person" assessment of a cadet's aptitude for commissioned service. The OASB would include AOC, peer and faculty ratings, participation in leadership positions, and adherence to the Academy Core Values as shown in cadet records.

There was a significant congressional and media backlash to Brig Gen Gamble's process when five seniors were disenrolled as a result of the OASB review in March 1994. All five had otherwise met the minimum academic, physical, and military standards. Public and congressional pressure and the threat of lawsuits resulted in reinstatement of four of the cadets (the fifth was disenrolled for not meeting tangible Academy standards). The OASB was dissolved after Brig Gen Gamble's departure the following year. The commissioning suitability concerns remain

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[7] *History of the United States Air Force Academy: 1965-1970*. Cannon and Fellerman. July 1970 (p. 59).

[8] The military performance average (MPA) provides a comprehensive assessment of a cadet's military performance. AOCs and activity supervisors will assign cadets an MPA rating at the end of the fall and spring semesters and at the end of each Summer Program for which a cadet is not in a student/research status. The Semester MP is broken into the following components: the Squadron Subjective appraisal (considers duty performance, officership, and peer appraisals), an Objective appraisal (compiles scores from Knowledge or Certification Tests and formal inspections), and an Instructor appraisal from DF and/or 34th Education Group instructors. In addition, if a cadet is involved in activities outside the cadet squadron, other rating may apply. A rating of 4.0 reflects the highest possible rating, 3.0 is an "above-average" rating, 2.0 is "meeting minimum standards of graduation and commissionability," and a rating less than 2.0 is considered "substandard" and may result in Aptitude probation. Substandard performance in military performance (or academic and physical performance) could lead to disenrollment action. A cumulative MPA of 2.0 or higher is required for graduation.

III. History Relevant to the Study

unresolved, and commissioning suitability continues to be an issue for all Air Force accession sources.

III. History Relevant to the Study

IV. Methodology

To address the Air Force's concerns (see the detailed study requirements in Figure 4), the ANSER Team conducted an extensive review of the cadet development process at the Air Force Academy, from the start of cadets' USAFA careers until their commissioning. To build a complete picture of cadet development, the Team focused its research on identifying and defining facets of the development process: cadet admissions, the ODS, the FCS, and measures for determining commissioning suitability. After gaining a thorough understanding of each facet, the ANSER Team analyzed and evaluated those processes to arrive at the findings and recommendations presented in this report. ANSER's entire methodological process is described in detail below.

ANSER's full methodology followed three distinct but overlapping phases.

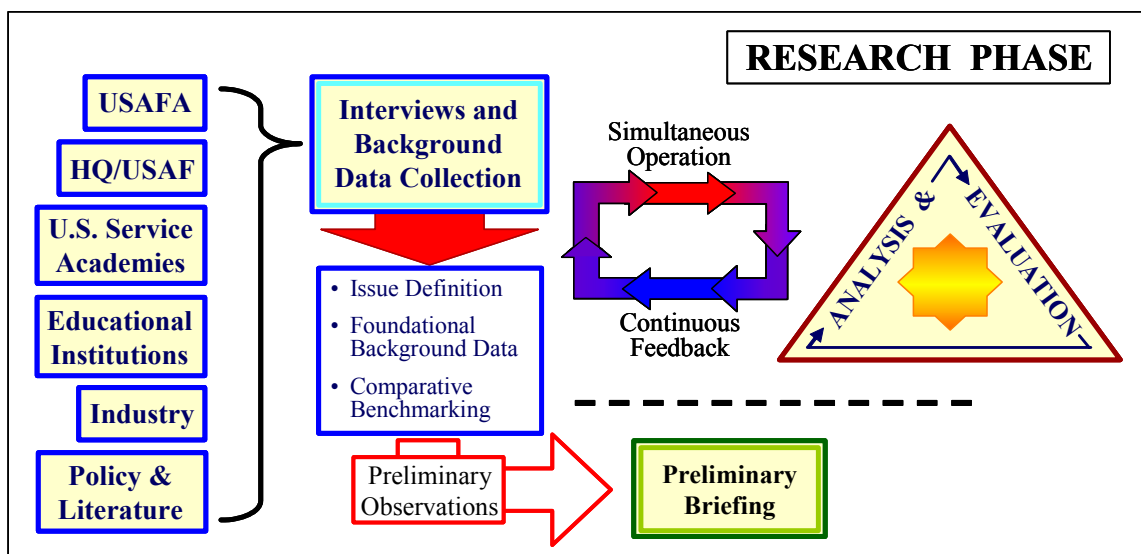- Research Phase

- Analysis Phase

- Evaluation Phase
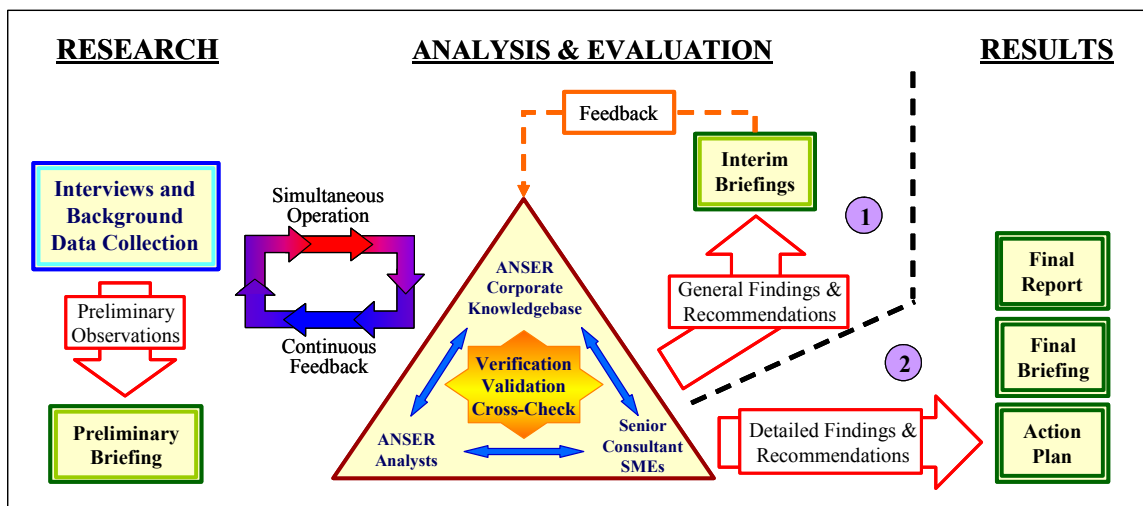
Figure 4: ANSER Methodological Process

As shown in Figure 4, each phase led to development of the next while institutionalizing continual feedback. This allowed research to shape analysis and evaluation while allowing the analysis to direct the focus of research. Each phase—Research, Analysis and Evaluation, and Results—is summarized below.

IV. Methodology

Figure 5: Research Phase

The Research Phase combined literature and document searches, interviews, and data collection from sources across DoD, industry, and institutions of higher learning for several purposes: to collect foundational background data, to establish comparative benchmarks, and, most important, to identify issues that detract from cadet development.

The broad scope of the study demanded extensive document research to assess the policies, doctrine, and programs in place in USAF and USAFA that govern cadet admission, development, and suitability for commissioning. Research also was conducted to enhance the Team's grounding in character and leadership development and to investigate the role that psychological testing might play in screening potential cadets and in providing feedback to cadets engaged in the officer development process.

In addition, members of the Study Team conducted approximately 400 hours of interviews with personnel across the Academy—past and present—to gain "on the ground" perspective of programs and practices. Moreover, numerous onsite interviews were conducted with personnel at HQ/AF and at the other Service academies, with 17 congressional staffs, with members of industry, and with leaders in higher education. The best practices of other institutions were gathered during these interviews to lay the groundwork of the comparative benchmarking process and then to identify the strengths and shortfalls of the Academy's system during the Team's analysis and evaluation.

As data were accumulated and analyzed to identify the gaps between the ideal and current states of admissions, ODS, and FCS, and determinations of commissioning suitability, the Study Team formulated findings and, where necessary, pursued sources of further research. This phase included dialogue and consultations with senior subject matter experts at ANSER.

IV. Methodology
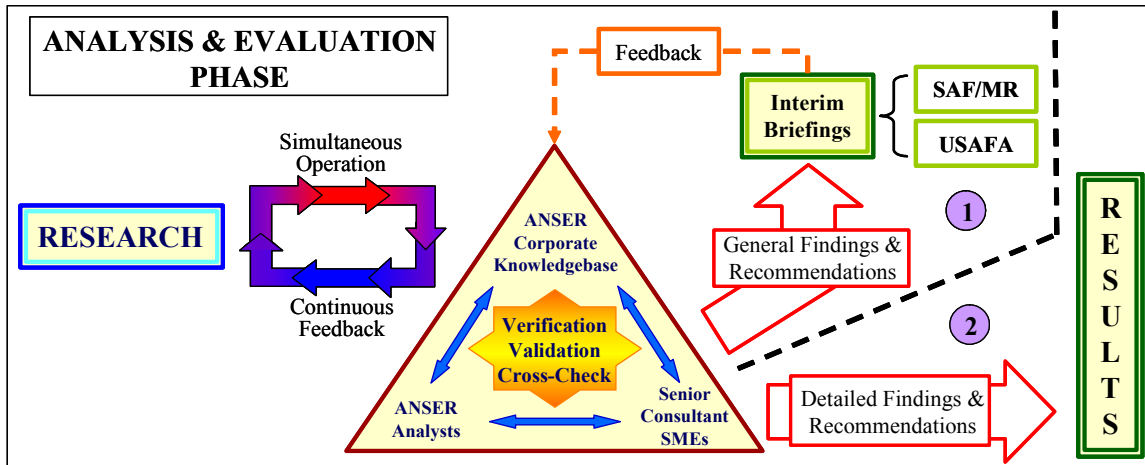
Figure 6: Analysis and Evaluation Phase

The Team's investigation of psychological testing generated nearly 600 potential psychological instruments, but through analysis and evaluation, only a fraction were found to be of potential value during the officer development process.

Conceptual Frameworks

In light of the purpose and history underpinning this study, four conceptual frameworks provided the structure for our final report and guide our findings and recommendations: (1) organizational design, (2) organizational change, (3) organizational culture change, and (4) an Individual Development Model. (See Annex 10 for model figures.) These frameworks are briefly discussed below.

Organizational Design Model

Using the lens of an *organizational design model,* the effectiveness of USAFA was viewed through three key activities: *input, throughput,* and *output* processes.

Figure 2: Organizational Design Model

IV. Methodology

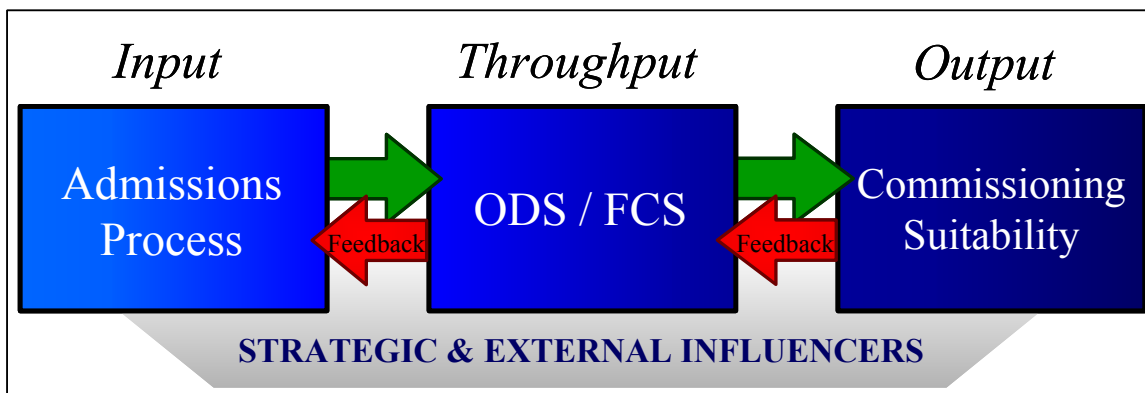The admission process sets the preconditions (selection and preparation) for the success of the throughput process—the 47-month cadet journey of development as a leader of character through ODS. The output of that journey is officers who have successfully completed the rigorous programs associated with ODS and are suitable for commissioning as officers in the U.S. Air Force. If the admission process provides the right kinds of candidates and ODS rigorously focuses on development of leaders of character across the six key dimensions of a cadet's life (intellectual, professional, physical, spiritual, ethical, and social), then the natural outcome is leaders of character. A feedback loop, in Figure 2, shows the interrelationship among the systems. This is an open-system model, so the external environment affects the processes as well.

Organizational Change Model

> ODS is like a big boulder---you have to get it in motion first then keep pushing it until it can roll on its own momentum.

> —USAFA Staff Officer

The Organizational Change Model is guided by the research of John Kotter.[9] Kotter suggests that there are eight main reasons for failure of organizational change. Keep in mind that we are analyzing a long-term change process that is barely through the first year of execution and implementation. The Academy is doing many things effectively. What follows necessarily focuses on what we see as potential problem areas and areas on which to focus energy and resources. Of the eight areas, three pose the *greatest* potential for failure of the organizational change efforts at the Academy:

- Allowing too much complacency
  - o Loss of momentum below the executive level (Dean, Commandant, AD).
  - o Many think it is business as usual: "We have always done it, so this is nothing new and there is no need to change." Or "The Academy's problems were caused by a few 'bad apples' and they are gone now, so there is no need to change the system."
  - o Lag in establishing an integration office at the Superintendent's level.
  - o "Study fatigue" causes many to resist change and seek stability.
  - o Perception by many that "we have to wait until the current upper classes graduate" before real change takes place.
  - o Persistent notion that change will take eight to ten years.

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[9] See Annex 10.

IV. Methodology

- Under-communicating the vision by a factor of ten[10]

  o Expectations and responsibilities within ODS are not clear.

  o Rewards and punishments do not complement the ODS framework.

  o Communication must improve from the ground up and laterally across mission elements.

- Permitting obstacles to block the new vision

  o External environmental factors: press, Association of Graduates, numerous studies.

  o Internal resistance to change by some within mission elements.

  o "Tyranny of the urgent" inhibits long-range planning.

  o Bureaucratic requirements, such as filling manpower positions.

Kotter then suggests *eight critical steps* that must be taken for effective organizational change. The key steps that USAFA must focus on *now* are

- Developing a vision and strategy[11]

  o At USAFA, vision is developed, but not the strategic plan to achieve it.

  o The strategies are required for executing that vision.

- Empowering broad-based action

  o Lots of initiatives, but they are not coordinated, synchronized, and integrated across mission elements.

  o Action required:
    - Eliminating obstacles.
    - Changing systems or structures that undermine the vision change.
    - Encouraging risk taking and nontraditional ideas, activities, and actions.

- Consolidating gains and producing greater change

  o The Academy must keep ODS momentum.

  o Action required:
    - Using increased credibility to change all systems, structures, and policies that don't fit together and don't fit the transformation vision.
    - Hiring, promoting, and developing people who can implement the change vision.
    - Reinvigorating the process with new projects, themes, and change agents.

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[10] "Communication is in both words and deeds. Without credible communication, and a lot of it, employees' hearts and minds are never captured." Commonly, organizations rely on communications they use in more stable times and devote only a fraction of their communication to gaining the confidence and support necessary for lasting change (Kotter, *Leading Change*, pp. 9-10).

[11] The strategic plan is scheduled for publication in December 2005.

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Organizational Culture Model

The Organizational Culture Model is guided by the research of Edgar Schein.[12] Schein suggests
that cultural change requires a focus on specific *embedding* and *reinforcing* mechanisms to guide
the behavior of organizational leaders (see Annex 10). In our Study, we focus on

- Primary
  - How leaders communicate their values, priorities, and concerns.
  - How leaders model desired behavior, consistent with organizational vision.
  - How leaders allocate rewards.
  - How leaders select, reward, and fire subordinates.
- Secondary
  - How leaders design systems and procedures that transmit the organizational vision
    and change initiatives.
  - How leaders restructure or redesign the organization consistent with change
    requirements—for example, hierarchical versus flat structures; matrix structures.

Individual Development Model

Finally, our assessments and recommendations are governed by an Individual Development
Model (consistent with the Leadership Growth Model associated with ODS). Individual
development is organized around four key considerations:

- Individuals have the right *experiences*[13]
- at the right level of *individual readiness*[14]
- and have *reflected* on their experiences[15] and
- have had sufficient *time* for developmental movement.[16]

We found USAFA's greatest need for improvement to be in the areas of feedback, structured
reflection, and allowing time for these activities to occur.

Detailed findings and recommendations resulting from our analyses and evaluation lead to the
Results Phase. The Results Phase generated our findings and recommendations, as well as a

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[12] See Edgar Schein's research.

[13] Must be a categorization of what the key experiences are—what experiences every cadet should have as a baseline
that create a significant opportunity for development.

[14] The knowledge component is heavy here, but it is the knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes that are required
to facilitate learning in the relevant experience.

[15] With support and feedback from a faculty and staff that understand, embrace, and practice—role models—the
professional identities and commitments.
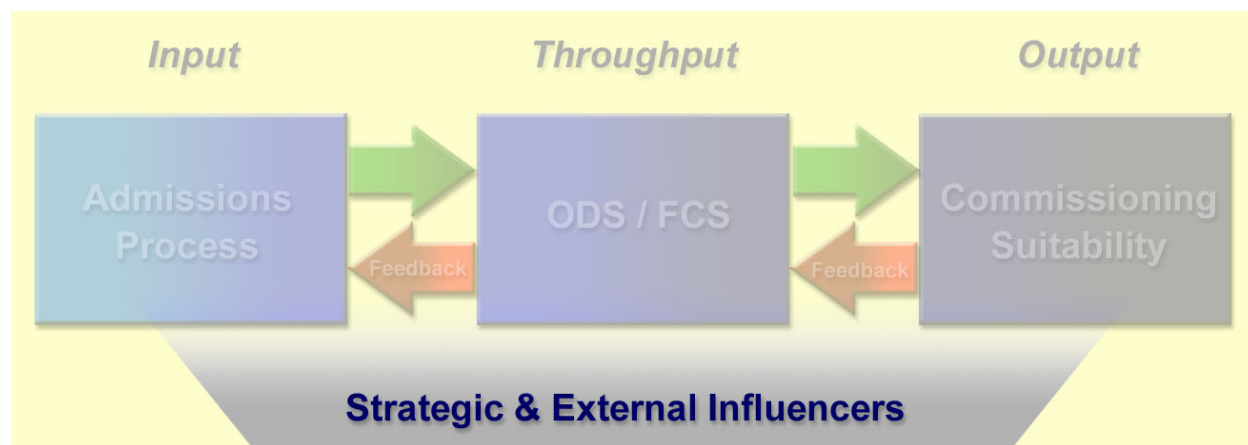
[16] Recognizing that not all cadets will develop at the same speed, but sufficient forward movement is essential.

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proposed action plan for the Academy to continue improvement of its cadet development process.

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V. Strategic Level—HQ/AF and Sec USAF

Introduction

The transformational and cultural change under way at USAFA does not and cannot happen in a vacuum. Strategic factors affect the Academy's structure, processes, and programs. The Superintendent is the strategic leader who not only has organizational leadership responsibilities, but who also must represent the Academy in the necessary interaction with the entities that constitute USAFA's external environment. The Superintendent, along with the SAF and CSAF, must conceptually envision the desired future state for the Academy and then direct the flow of internal, and the influence of external, events toward that end. This section focuses on the strategic leadership concerns that the Teams believe affect the Academy's efforts at transformation.

The strategic leadership environment consists of both internal and external complexities that directly and indirectly affect the resourcing, structuring, and operational performance of the organization. The dynamics of implementing a new character and leadership development system, the shifting of public attitudes toward education in general and the Academy in particular, the rapid advances in technology and knowledge, fluctuating budgets, and the evolution of new missions in the contemporary operating environment make the challenges of strategic leadership that much more difficult. The only constant in the strategic environment is the continuous acceleration of the rate of change, which gives rise to greater uncertainties. Without effective strategic leadership, USAF and USAFA will be incapable of influencing the environment to support the Academy's transformation.

The successful implementation of ODS is influenced by, and influences, the external environment. The most significant of these external *relationships* include the operational Air Force, other commissioning sources, and the other Military Services. Managing these relationships is among the important responsibilities of the SAF and CSAF.

The most significant external *issues* that influence the Academy's transformation change efforts include

- Economic concerns that affect the cost of recruiting and retaining faculty

- Increased demands for educational quality and teaching excellence

- The cost of producing new knowledge and the attendant implications for teaching loads, faculty education and training, and the academic and military curriculum

- Congressional concerns about the Academy's educational environment, coupled with heightened accountability to government, the public and alumni (for example, the Academy's Association of Graduates)

- Issues of race, gender, ethnicity, religion, and other dimensions of identity

- Parents and family members

By staying abreast of the external issues and developing positive relationships with the external environment, the Superintendent, the SAF, and the CSAF are in a position to intelligently influence those relationships. The Superintendent, the SAF, and the CSAF can use the access that their positions accord and apply the communicative arts of education and persuasion to build consensus with these key players to make achievement of the Academy's strategic vision a reality.

USAFA is a learning-centered military academy with a broad set of responsibilities that differentiate it from most civilian colleges and universities. Having embarked on the process of cultural change, the challenge for USAFA and any enduring institution is not to change once, but to change repeatedly in response to legitimate internal and external demands. What is required for USAFA to successfully transform given the demands of its external environment is the ability to change, learn from the experience, and be able to change again. Successfully negotiating the *right* changes at the Academy will require close cooperation among the Superintendent, the SAF, the CSAF, HQ/AF, the operational Air Force, and USAFA in managing the external environment.

What follows are the key findings, discussions, and recommendations that must be addressed at the HQ/AF and Secretary of the Air Force levels to ensure that USAFA remains an enduring institution and the USAF's premier commissioning source.

Strategic Findings, Discussions, and Recommendations

Finding: USAFA is not viewed as "the *Air Force's* Academy."

Discussion: Service at the Academy is widely viewed as a "step out" of the Air Force, or "dead time," and is not seen as career enhancing. This longstanding problem is a particular concern as the Academy transforms from an attrition model to a developmental model of leader and character development. Role modeling and providing the challenging developmental opportunities, associating those experiences with the operational Air Force, and the critical role

of assessing character require the best-qualified people at the Academy. This is an investment in the future of USAF.

Additionally, USAFA is not seen by the operational Air Force as its premier institution to tackle its biggest problems. The repository of highly educated and experienced people at the Academy should be a source of intellectual capital for USAF, but it is not used to the extent that the Army uses West Point, for example.

USAFA graduates two classes a year: the cadets *and* the rotating faculty who leave USAFA and rejoin the operational Air Force. They bring back to the Air Force three years of experience developing leaders of character as well as a depth of knowledge in an academic discipline. There is a tremendous opportunity for the Air Force to leverage this infusion of talent to undergo its own cultural transformation. In fact, the efforts of ODS will be of limited value if they are not embraced and sustained for those joining or returning to the operational Air Force.

The new AFDD1-1 Leadership and Force Development Doctrine is just starting to work its way into the operational Air Force. USAFA has already taken that doctrine and incorporated and operationalized it in ODS. The ten ODS outcomes, for example, provide a solid basis for professional military education (PME) at Air University as well as for professional development in the operational Air Force.

Steps have been taken to improve staff and faculty recruiting, selecting, and training. The Commandant is now getting quality officers from the top 20 percent of the command list to staff the AOC positions. CSAF issued a paper encouraging all Air Force officers to seek assignment at the training and educational institutions as part of their career path. Instructions are now given to selection boards about the importance of assignments in education, and specifically about duty at the Academy. Training and education duty is now in the expected career plan for Air Force specialties. However, it will take time for the cultural bias against Academy duty to change.

Recommendation S1: *Establish policies, procedures, and incentives in recruiting and selection of Air Force personnel to encourage duty at the commissioning source institutions. This is particularly important in the short term, where the CSAF has established a policy, but the field is waiting to see whether or not this is rewarded in a tangible and visible way.*

When warranted, favorable promotions for AOCs, as well as subsequent opportunities for command and other professionally challenging assignments, should follow an AOC's duty at the Academy. Promotion boards should be given clear communications and instructions regarding the roles and responsibilities of AOCs at USAFA. Investigate the impact of requesting an increase in the allocation of DP slots, and then carefully allocate those to high-performing AOCs.

Recommendation S2: *Plan to establish* a Center for Character and Leadership *at USAFA.* This would be the Air Force's premier center for research, education, and training for character and leadership development.

V. Strategic Level—HQ/AF and Sec USAF

Recommendation S3: *Extend the principles embedded in ODS to the operational Air Force— through the PME courses and the professional military development programs in operational units.[17]*

Finding: There is no consistent, deliberate process to link the pre-commissioning process and content to the 21st-century operational Air Force's needs. This has not been a significant problem in the past, but it needs attention to ensure future congruence in a rapidly changing world environment.

> The Air Force is "Top Gun" rather than "Saving Private Ryan"..there seems to be more focus on preserving the present than doing what is important for the customer of the future.
>
> —USAFA faculty member

Discussion: There is no process for the operational Air Force to provide shape, review, or oversee the Commissioning Education Memorandum of Understanding (CEMU) directly.[18] However, the operational Air Force does validate the PME at Air University through a document called the Continuum of Education. The Air University Command Board of Advisers comprises the Vice Chiefs of the USAF MAJCOMs. They meet at least annually (except when ops tempo prevents) to review the relevancy of PME. Their discussions and guidance are included in the updates of the Continuum of Education (which occurs every two to three years). This is a cumbersome and ineffective process that should be streamlined.

Additionally, it is not clear how current and future-looking requirements for 21st-century Air Force officers, such as those recently developed by the Air Force Senior Leader Management Office (AFSLMO), are incorporated into the CEMU. AFSLMO should have a direct link to development and modification of the CEMU.

Another way in which pre-commissioning curriculum is linked to the field is through the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools (AFOATS) annual survey of the operational Air Force. AFOATS surveys supervisors of its graduates to determine to what extent their programs are meeting the field's needs. USAFA has done this periodically over the past ten years but does not do this as a matter of course. It is important to have regular feedback from the field,

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[17] Professional Military Education courses are the formal professional development courses taught at institutions, primarily Air University.

[18] CEMU is a non-binding mutually agreed-upon set of curriculum areas delineating what ought to be taught in the pre-commissioning programs. The CEMU is a product of the Commissioning Training and Education Committee, chaired by the curriculum coordinator in AFOATS. The CEMU is updated every two to three years, or more frequently when needed. There is generally good agreement on this document, and the programs make a good-faith effort to cover all the subject areas. Note that the CEMU addresses content but does not identify standards or measurements to assess level of mastery or demonstrated satisfactory performance in the content areas. The committee is a steering committee that has four working group subcommittees under it: Leadership, Profession of Arms, Communications Skills, and Military Studies.

both from graduates and those who supervise them, as part of the assessment of how well USAFA is meeting the needs of the operational Air Force.

USAFA has recently expanded its "Operation Air Force" program so that all three upper classes will have duty with operational units. This effort is of immense importance to the cadets as they directly learn about their profession. It is imperative that the MAJCOMs receiving the cadets partner with the Academy to construct and supervise these experiences for maximum developmental benefit. Many of our interviews and focus groups revealed that, in the past, these activities were not well structured and supervised. The key to success is that CSAF strongly support these efforts by underscoring their importance to the MAJCOMs.

Finally, other Service academies have instituted a "Returning Graduate Program." Many junior officers return to visit the academies, meeting with small groups of cadets to share their experiences and observations in operational units. This is also very important for the Air Force, particularly since the Air Force is now fully "expeditionary." It is important for cadets to hear about the realities and expectations of operational Air Force life from those who have recently graduated. This is a strategic issue because it is very costly to take large numbers of officers out of their operational units for a visit to the Academy (and other commissioning sources). However, the value to the Air Force in the long run is well worth the cost. The CSAF should endorse and encourage field commanders to support such requests by the commissioning sources.

Recommendations S4: *Review knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and competencies required of a 21st-century USAF officer and align USAFA curriculum accordingly.* Consider rebalancing engineering and humanities requirements. Coordinate the necessary force development requirements for each USAFA major to ensure that total force development needs are being met.

Recommendation S5: *Pre-commissioning curricula need to be reviewed by the Air University Command Board of Advisers in conjunction with their review of the relevancy of PME. It might not be annual, but it should be periodic (two to three years).*

Recommendation S6: *Conduct an annual survey to determine how USAFA—and ROTC and OTS—are or are not meeting the needs of the operational Air Force. Make sure content is USAF specific and ODS specific and that it addresses the six ODS developmental dimensions, the four officership traits, and the three core values.*

Recommendation S7: *Require and resource MAJCOMs to support USAFA and ROTC cadet operational opportunities.*

> Cadets identify more with lieutenants than generals.
>
> —USAFA AOC

Recommendation S8: *Endorse and resource Academy efforts to expand a Returning Graduate Program.*

V. Strategic Level—HQ/AF and Sec USAF

Finding: USAF and USAFA could better partner with other commissioning sources, military Services and Service academies to address areas of common interest and concern. This can be assisted by senior leaders of the military Services.

Discussion: USAFA has not worked very closely with the other commissioning sources (ROTC and OTS). As a result, the flow of information and best practices among them has been sporadic. With ODS and the emphasis on leaders of character, there is an opportunity for USAF to leverage what is learned by this program at USAFA to benefit all commissioning sources.

Steps have been taken to improve commissioning source linkages. An office has been established at HQ/AF to coordinate oversight among the commissioning sources. Curriculum positions have been established in the Commandant's office to coordinate the CEMU. Commissioning suitability boards have been directed to review all students before they are commissioned. However, it is necessary to have an operational oversight capability for the implementation and execution of policies that are jointly established at HQ/AF. Accountability and responsibility for program execution are not resident at the operational level.

Dialogue has increased across military Service lines and Service academies. However, inter-Service and inter-academy rivalries still get in the way of cooperation. A number of conferences and meetings are held among the commissioning sources, but enhanced working group collaboration would better establish programs and standards to benefit all. For instance, our field visits and interviews revealed that all of the academies are looking for psychological instruments to

- Assess character for admissions
- Assess character development while at the Academy
- Assess suitability for commissioning

No satisfactory instruments have been found, but each Service academy is researching this area on its own. Presumably, pooling manpower and money resources would help all academies jointly develop instruments that all could use. Additionally, all academies are trying to establish or improve their character development programs, particularly those that develop the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions. The academies could partner to improve these programs.

Recommendation S9: *Expand the capabilities of the Air Force to oversee operational implementation of commissioning suitability programs and processes, facilitate cross-talk, share best practices, and be a resource for all of the commissioning source programs.*

Recommendation S10: *Joint venture with the other Services to explore development of psychological instruments to better assess character for officer candidates for admission, development, and commissioning suitability.*

Recommendation S11: *Joint venture with the other Services to develop pre-commissioning programs for the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of officer development.*

V. Strategic Level—HQ/AF and Sec USAF

Finding: External environmental demands placed on USAFA by the media, Congress, and graduates, combined with the significant efforts required for internal transformational change at USAFA, create the need for a Provost or Deputy Superintendent at USAFA.

Discussion: The Superintendent, as the strategic leader of the Academy, has the primary responsibility to interact with and shape the external environment. Much of the Superintendent's time is spent managing forces opposed to the organizational changes occurring at USAFA. Change is viewed by many outside the Academy, as well as some inside the Academy, as being externally imposed. The manner in which change was implemented has created resistance by opposing forces. Those opponents argue that change was really not necessary. Opponents of change feel that the Academy's problems were minor, were limited to a few individuals, and have been exaggerated. This also has led to the perception that the Academy's leadership does not have control over the changes and is not the driver of change. In addition, there is a sense that change implies that the old ways were wrong. This is expressed as, "It was good enough for me; why is it all of a sudden bad or wrong now?" The best response to this would be a statement by Michael Josephson: "You don't have to be sick to get better."[19]

Public (and congressional) perceptions are shaped by the media: 82 percent of the articles published by the *Gazette* are negative (based on an archive search).[20] The *Gazette* has paid scant attention to the many positive changes occurring at the Academy. This unbalanced reporting consumes an inordinate amount of leadership's time and distracts from the main purpose of developing leaders of character.

Steps have been taken to improve this relationship with the external environment:

- The Strategic Communication Office is in frequent contact with the *Gazette* reporter covering the Academy beat.

- Sessions have been conducted to educate the alumni on changes taking place at the Academy both in public forums and through Association of Graduates publications.

- USAF is communicating expectations and priorities to the Academy through metrics and measurements.

- Senior Academy leaders frequently meet with Academy personnel to inform and publicize progress in the change process and address concerns.

As external demands are increasing, there is an increased need to supervise and drive the cultural transformation internally. To adequately deal with both the internal and external demands, we have identified the requirement for a Provost or Deputy Superintendent. This person can focus primarily on the execution of the Academy's strategy and vision while allowing the Superintendent to set the conditions to allow change to proceed with limited interference. While the other Service academies may not have a provost, we were told during our visits to those

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[19] Michael Josephson in an outbrief to the USAFA faculty of his study "Assessment and Recommendations Concerning Character Development at the Air Force Academy," November 29, 2004.

academies that they believe such a position to be necessary. Additionally, all other Air Force three-star commands have a deputy commander.

Finally, the internal environment needs to be managed. The Superintendent unnecessarily gets involved in preliminary discussions rather than being involved primarily in decision making. A Provost could mediate differences between and among mission elements. Even in the current climate of great cooperation and trust among the executive leaders at USAFA, numerous issues that a Provost could resolve are settled only at the Superintendent's level. Furthermore, flattening the organizational structure—moving the Athletic Director back under the Superintendent— drives the need for additional supervision. A Provost could sort these issues and run the day-to-day operations while the Superintendent shapes the external environment.

Recommendation S12: *Establish and fill the position of a Provost or Deputy Superintendent, as a two-star equivalent position, to ensure integration of ODS across the mission elements.* This person needs to have a strong academic, operational, and, if possible, athletics background with proven abilities to build consensus among disparate groups. The term of service should be a minimum of five years to provide continuity of oversight during the transformation period.

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[20] The search covered an 18-month period between July 3, 2003 and January 3, 2005.

VI. Admissions
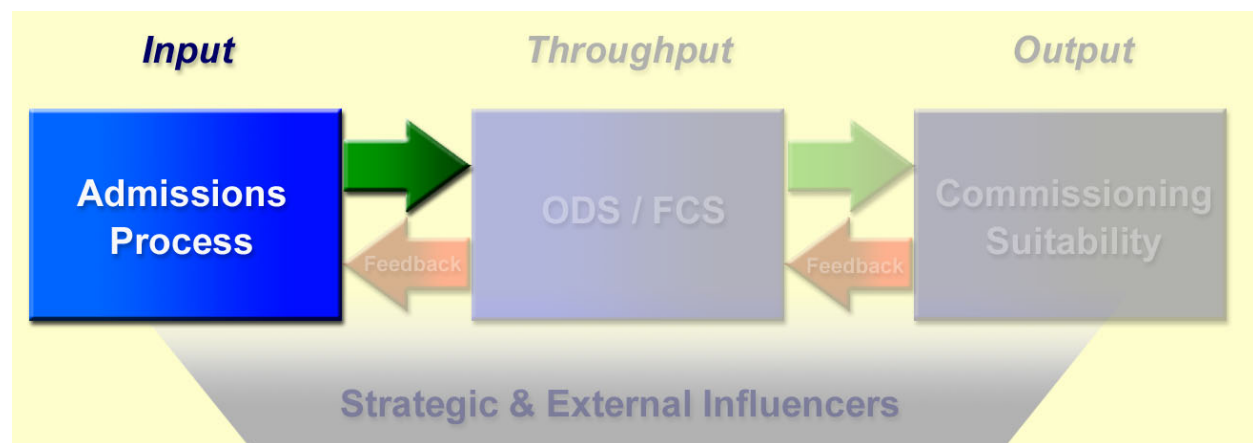
Introduction

Admissions is the "input" part of the systems model the Team used to analyze the Academy. This section examines three key components of the input process and how they are used to assess character: the congressional nomination process, ALOs, and the USAFA Admissions Office.

What We Were Asked to Do

We begin this section by describing, at a macro level, the USAFA admissions process. We then discuss our research and findings regarding the congressional staffs, ALOs, and the USAFA Admissions Office. We conclude with a summary of the findings and recommendations.

The Study Team was asked to assess the roles played by Members of Congress, congressional staffers, and ALOs in the admissions process. Where and when appropriate, we were asked to recommend ways to improve the admissions process. We also were asked to examine how the information obtained by Members of Congress and congressional staffers ultimately is used and weighted in the admissions process.

Methodology

The Study Team examined the admissions process primarily through face-to-face interviews with staff members responsible for administering the admissions program at the Academy or administering nomination programs for Members of Congress. Particularly with respect to the congressional nomination process, interviews were conducted with representatives of a cross-section of congressional offices achieved through variation and balance among regions of the country, population density, political party affiliation, time in office, membership on Senate or House Armed Services Committees, military service, whether the person was a graduate of a military Service academy, and gender.

Representatives of eight Senators' offices and nine Representatives' offices were interviewed. Afterward, the Study Team analyzed the interview data. Major patterns and trends emerged, resulting in the identification of themes and findings. Upon reviewing the results, we determined that further interviews would have limited utility, as no additional themes were likely to emerge.[21]

The Study Team administered a web-based, non-attribution survey to the ALOs to directly obtain their perspectives regarding the admissions process and their role in it.[22] Besides some basic demographic background information, the survey obtained ALO responses with Likert scales for their interactions with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office and congressional offices, use of various factors in evaluating applicants, and admissions process activities. Additionally, the survey solicited written comments from ALOs about their interactions with the Admissions Office and congressional offices, how they assess applicant responses to issues of moral complexity and character, and suggestions for making improvements to the admissions process.

The Team also reviewed six brochures, the USAFA catalog, and two CDs related to admissions and the Academy. Three of the brochures were published by the Air Force Recruiting Service, and three brochures and the catalog were produced by USAFA. The CDs were produced by a private-sector firm in collaboration with the Academy. Brochure titles are "Success Doesn't Just Happen: It Builds From a Strong Foundation"; "Life Is a Highway: Choose the Road that Leads to Success"; "Discover the Academy"; "Summer Seminar: The Challenge Begins Here"; "Air Force Academy"; and "Tomorrow's Future, Today's Leaders: Women at the Air Force Academy." The other items are the United States Air Force Academy Catalog 2004-2005 and two CDs: "Aim High: Choosing to Grow and Serve"[23] and "The United States Air Force Academy: Leadership for the New Millennium."[24]

The Admissions Process

Seeking admission to USAFA is a dual-track process by which applicants must obtain a congressional nomination as well as complete an Academy admissions application to gain an appointment to the Academy. Requiring a congressional nomination for admission distinguishes the Service academies from other academic institutions. Although there are general parameters, each congressional office has its own requirements, standards, and processes for granting nominations. Candidates are ranked by the Academy's Admissions Office pursuant to a whole-

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[21] A list of congressional offices that participated in the study and their staff members interviewed appears in Annex 3. The congressional staff background information form completed by interviewees is in Annex 4, the interview questionnaire is in Annex 5, and a list of congressional staff interview findings is in Annex 6.

[22] 872 ALOs responded to the survey—an overall response rate of approximately 49 percent. The survey instrument appears in Annex 8. A summary of ALO survey results is in Annex 9.

[23] "Aim High: Choosing to Grow and Serve," Director of Admissions, produced by Word One Associates, Inc. CD production is sponsored by the Association of Graduates.

[24] "United States Air Force Academy: Leadership for the New Millennium," Director of Admissions, produced by Word One Associates, Inc. CD production is sponsored by the Association of Graduates. 1994, 1996, 1999. (Note: "1994, 1996" appeared on the CD and the USAFA Admissions Office said it was last updated in 1999.)

person evaluation, which consists of an academic component, an extracurricular component, (which indicates athletic and non-athletic activities) and a component awarded by the admissions panel.

- The academic portion of the composite score is created from a combination of the candidate's academic record in high school and standardized test scores. The academic component forms 60 percent of the total composite score.

- Another component of the whole-person composite score is based on participation in athletic and non-athletic extracurricular activities. A premium is given for officer and leadership positions. This component is derived primarily from a form filled out and submitted by the candidate. The extracurricular component forms 20 percent of the total composite score. An admission selection panel composed of eight to nine representatives across the Academy's faculty, training wing, and athletic department provides the remaining 20 percent of the overall composite score.

- This final 20 percent is identified as the "people/character" aspect of the composite score and is "usually the tiebreaker" among competitive candidates. This score is based almost entirely on input from ALOs who interacted directly with the candidate.

Once the admissions panel recommends that a candidate be offered admission, the recommendation is forwarded to the Academy Board. The Academy Board, made up of ten USAFA senior leaders, acts as the Superintendent's advisory panel, and is the final authority for offers of appointment.

An applicant must have a nomination from an authorized nominating source identified in statute in order to be considered for an appointment to a Service academy.[25] The first and most common category[26] is usually referred to as "congressional nominations" and includes the nominations of the vice president and Members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.[27] Three methods of nomination may be used by Members of Congress: (1) competitive,[28] (2) principal with competing alternates,[29] and (3) principal with numbered alternates.[30] Beyond these general

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[25] 10 USC, Section 9342.

[26] Congressional nominations account for three-fourths of all appointments.

[27] The second method, referred to as "Service-connected" or "military-affiliated" nominations, includes the selections of the President and nominations of the appropriate Service (such as the Air Force Secretary's nominations to the Academy). Applicants are encouraged to apply to all nomination sources for which they are eligible.

[28] The *competitive nomination process* is the method most favored by the Academy and used by most Members of Congress (approximately 70-75%). The Member of Congress submits to USAFA an unranked slate of up to ten nominees for each vacancy. The candidates are then ranked by the Academy in order of merit. The most highly qualified is selected for an offer of admission (an appointment) to fill the vacancy.

[29] The principal with *competing alternate nominees method* allows the Member of Congress to designate a principal nominee. The other nine unranked nominees are submitted to USAFA for evaluation and compete as alternates. If the principal is fully qualified (academics, medical and physical aptitude), he or she will be appointed and will fill the vacancy. If the principal does not qualify, the alternates then compete for the vacancy.

parameters, each congressional office establishes its own requirements, standards, and processes for granting nominations.

The Service academies provide information sessions for congressional offices to help them become familiar with admissions processes and programs, activities, and schedules for cadets or midshipmen. USAFA hosts three-day Congressional Staffer Orientations once or twice per year for congressional staff members responsible for conducting and managing the applicant evaluation and nomination processes for their Member of Congress.

Additionally, the Service academies jointly host one-day Congressional Workshops in large cities around the country.[31] The content of the five-hour workshops is similar to the final day of USAFA orientations: topics include nomination, selection, and admissions processes; congressional liaison issues; and medical issues. USAFA has a lead role in making presentations at the workshops. The other Service academies discuss their differences and current affairs at their respective institutions. Although it is not mandatory that congressional staffers attend orientations and workshops, they are highly encouraged to do so. USAFA makes an extra effort to invite congressional offices that have nominated only a few or no candidates.

The Study Team believes that the orientations and workshops are effective events for Service academies to communicate with congressional staffs. The Study Team estimates that 25 percent of congressional offices attend Air Force Academy orientations and joint academy workshops each year. Therefore, to reach all congressional offices in these sessions (assuming that no staffs attend more than once) would take four years. Given the high turnover rate of staffers, change in elected representatives in Congress, and changes at the Academy, efforts should be made to increase congressional staffer attendance.

The Study Team found that congressional staffers responsible for nomination screening for Academy applicants generally have extensive experience managing the process.[32] The less-experienced staffers tend to be people beginning their congressional staff careers or working for Members who are freshmen. Congressional offices primarily look to other congressional offices for guidance in setting up their own nomination process, or they seek assistance directly from the Service academies. Congressional offices indicated that the Service academy admissions offices are very helpful in responding to specific questions or requests for information.

Slightly more than half of the Congressional staffers responsible for managing their Member's nomination processes have visited a Service academy, attended a congressional staff orientation

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[30] The *principal nominee* is designated and the alternate nominees are ranked in order of preference by the Member of Congress. If fully qualified, the principal nominee receives the appointment to fill the vacancy. If the principal nominee does not qualify, then the first alternate is considered for the appointment and so on.

[31] USAFA, USMA, USNA, USMMA, and USCGA attend the workshops. In 2004, workshops were conducted in Atlanta, Las Vegas, and Boston. For 2005, workshops are scheduled for Dallas in May, Chicago in June, and San Francisco in July.

[32] While the congressional staffs had a good understanding of their role in the nomination process, they generally did not understand the broader admissions processes that occur at USAFA regarding evaluating applicants and making offers of acceptance.

or academy-hosted tour for congressional staff, attended a congressional workshop, or attended an Academy Day event. Across the Services, congressional visits and participation in USAFA programs slightly outnumbered those that attended similar programs at West Point or the Naval Academy.

The Service academies also jointly produce the *Congressional Guide for Admission to the United States Service Academies*. Although under revision, the existing 2001 version contains only a single five-line paragraph addressing the requirement for candidate character. The document also mentions the merits of holding screening panels, describes the role of the various liaison officers, and briefly discusses the need for consistent contact with liaison officers.[33]

Many congressional staffers already had specific plans to improve their processes, such as increasing outreach efforts to potential applicants; establishing an interview board, committee, or panel in cases where they had not previously used one; and modifying forms used by individuals sitting on interview panels. *Congressional staffers were universally open to receiving additional guidance from Service academy admissions offices on ways to improve their procedures.*

> Congressional staffers were universally open to receiving additional guidance from Service academy admissions offices on ways to improve their procedures.

Character and Commissioning Suitability in the Congressional Nomination Process

Congressional offices look for nominees who are "good people of high quality." However, when asked an open-ended question about what primary or key factors they use to evaluate applicants, congressional staffers rarely mentioned the word *character*. In the rare instances when the word *character* was mentioned during an interview, it was defined as meaning a "good leader." Nevertheless, when prompted with a question about the importance of *character suitability*, congressional staffs stated that they consider character suitability to be a very important factor in evaluating applicants. A few staff offices had an appreciation for character; however, we found no consistent understanding of the definition for or meaning of character.

Finally, we found that character is rarely mentioned in congressional office application materials, such as letters from congressional offices to applicants, instructions to applicants, and guidelines and score sheets for their nomination panel members.[34]

With some notable exceptions, congressional offices generally appear oriented more toward nominating applicants and less toward disqualifying applicants. "We don't do a lot of weeding

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[33] The paragraph titled "Applicant Screening" on p. 8 states, "… Members are encouraged to conduct their own screening panels as part of the selection process" and "To assist the Member efficiently, members of the board should be briefed by a staff member or liaison officer each year as to the requirements of each academy and the latest information …"

[34] The research team did not receive full sets of application materials from every office, however.

out," one staffer observed. "We had 31 nominations in 2003 and only had three deemed not qualified." In another instance, a staffer indicated that he wanted to use a more stringent screening method but was informed by his superior that "nominating everyone is our policy." Another stated, "If a candidate wants to apply to an academy, we're going to give a nomination to them." On one occasion a Member of Congress instructed the staff to go ahead and give all the individuals nominations because they had the vacancies, were using the competitive method, and "It would make them all feel good."[35] Still another staffer indicated that anyone who requests a nomination gets it, as long as the person meets the academic requirements.

> With some notable exceptions, congressional offices generally appear oriented more toward nominating applicants and less toward disqualifying applicants.

The Team hastens to note that congressional offices with a bias toward nomination, as opposed to disqualification, see their role largely as a constituent service. Moreover, most if not all of these offices use the competitive nomination method. They assume, therefore, that the Service academies are doing more rigorous screenings of candidates at a subsequent point in the process. This research finding should not be construed as criticism of the status quo. Rather, it is an observation that the majority of congressional nomination processes are simply not designed to reliably screen for character. Service academies should not expect that Congress has conducted a significant character screening of nominated candidates.

We also note that in contrast to the norm, a few congressional offices cited character screening as the primary function of their nomination process. These offices tended to rely very heavily on distinguished and exceptionally qualified interview panelists to screen prospective candidates for character and render professional judgments on their suitability for attending the Service academies.

Congressional Interaction With the Academy's Admissions Office and Liaison Officers

Congressional staffers are impressed with the responsiveness of the USAFA Admissions Office to their questions and concerns. However, most congressional staffers have little or no interaction with any of the Academy ALOs, although there are notable exceptions. More than one-third either initially confuse ALOs with admissions office points of contact and/or do not know what the roles of ALOs are. Only two of 17 congressional staffs use evaluations and input from ALOs as part of their nomination process. Only five use ALOs as members of boards, panels, or committees they use to interview applicants seeking nominations.

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[35] Apparently, this was not the approach taken historically for this Member's office, however.

Summary—Congressional Nomination Procedures

Congressional nomination procedures and programs vary in terms of their overall thoroughness, quality, and degree of innovation. They vary as well in events they hold for applicants, nominees, and cadets or midshipmen. Some congressional offices have outstanding procedures and programs that can serve as best practices.[36]

Admissions Liaison Officers

The ALOs are a force of approximately 1,774 active-duty, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard officers, as well as retired officers and civilians. They represent the Air Force for purposes of recruiting and evaluating Academy and ROTC candidates. They are distributed throughout the country, and their primary role is to inform and counsel individuals interested in applying to the Academy and ROTC. The principal function of the ALO is to interview and evaluate Academy candidates and ROTC applicants.

The Director of Enrollment Programs (USAFA/RRP) directs the worldwide ALO force and its network of program activities. The Director is responsible for executing the National Training Program and ensures the effectiveness of ALOs and all program activities. The continental United States and overseas locations are divided into five geographic regions for command and control purposes, and each region is led by a Regional Director. Additionally, each region is subdivided into geographic areas, with a total of 79 areas worldwide. Regional Directors are responsible for implementing the ALO program, overseeing the Liaison Officer Directors serving as "area directors," and supervising the ALO program within their assigned region. Liaison Officer Directors are responsible for all ALO activities within their assigned area.

ALO Experience, Training, and Guidance

ALOs are characterized by having a broad range of experience from the newly assigned to some with over 35 years of experience. ALOs vary in rank from second lieutenant to major general. Close to 60 percent of those who responded to an ALO survey administered by the Study Team had less than six years' total experience. Most ALOs are reserve officers who undertake ALO responsibilities as their primary duty and generally for "points only." This means they earn points toward retirement for their duty but do not earn pay.

ALOs receive guidance and training through a variety of means, including web-based training, a written handbook that outlines policies and procedures, and some formal training that is primarily directed at newly assigned personnel. In survey responses, ALOs praised the *ALO Handbook* as generally "well-written and useful."[37] The ALO website also was praised as a real benefit that has vastly improved training and standardization. The formal training programs for

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[36] See Annex 7 for examples of some of these practices.

[37] One suggestion for improvement was to include a single chapter on each of the additional duty programs, outlining responsibilities, timelines, and sample correspondence. Some programs are outlined this way, while others are not.

ALOs were praised as well, although some ALOs expressed views that formal training should be broadened to include not just new ALOs but experienced liaison officers who could periodically get updates on the admissions process.

The number-one overall suggestion from ALOs for improving training and education was to work on improving communication between the Academy and the ALOs (acknowledging that improvements have been made recently). In the survey, several ALOs commented that they must better understand the overall admissions process in order to provide the best possible advice and mentoring to their candidates. Similarly, several ALOs expressed their desire to receive feedback on their candidates who subsequently become cadets in order to understand whether or not the methods they use in evaluating candidates are successful.[38]

> The number-one overall suggestion from ALOs for improving training and education was to work on improving communication between the Academy and the ALOs (acknowledging that improvements have been made recently).

Additional specific training and education suggestions taken from the surveys included teaching ALOs interview and evaluation skills and providing ALOs with a checklist outlining the entire candidate review process. The surveys also revealed a need for more Form 4060, "Candidate Evaluation," training, a topic discussed in greater detail below.

Character evaluation of candidates was an area identified in the surveys as needing more emphasis during the ALO training. ALO respondents suggested that a list of clearly defined and prioritized criteria on the ALO program would be helpful to determine what was most important to the Academy in evaluating cadets, including guidance on how to measure such objectives. "I would like to see more guidelines from [the Academy] on what they consider important character markers these days," one ALO noted. "Give us some guidance on how to talk about some of the touchy subjects," another stated. "Define character … what is it the Academy and more importantly, the Air Force, wants in an Air Force Officer?" another asked.

> Character evaluation of candidates was an area identified in the surveys as needing more emphasis during the ALO training.

Character Assessment Evaluation by ALOs

The Academy places a great deal of reliance on the ALO's character assessment for prospective candidates. The extent of this reliance will be described in greater detail in the discussion in the

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[38] Obviously limited by the Privacy Act.

following USAFA Admissions Office and panel sections. Here, we describe the character evaluation itself, primarily from the ALO's perspective.

Several themes emerged based on the Study Team's review of ALO survey responses. Many of these themes are quite positive. For example, ALOs place a great deal of emphasis on character in evaluating potential candidates. *Based on survey results, 88 percent of ALOs rank character as their number-one or number-two concern in evaluating prospective candidates.* The widely held view of the importance of this role obviously influenced the ALOs' desire, mentioned above, to have improved training in performing this function. There is also ample evidence that some ALOs go to significant lengths, well beyond the required candidate interview, to obtain reliable information regarding an individual's character. Finally, data from the survey support the notion that ALOs act as role models for prospective candidates, in some cases going well beyond their described duties in familiarizing the candidate with the Academy's values.

> Based on survey results, 88 percent of ALOs rank character as their number-one or number-two concern in evaluating prospective candidates.

As mentioned, the survey results suggest that the majority of ALOs place character assessment at or near the top of their evaluation criteria. However, 12 percent of respondents—which if extrapolated to the entire ALO force would represent over 200 liaison officers—place character lower or significantly lower in importance. That perspective is reflected in the survey comment of one ALO: "I do not spend a lot of time on the moral complexity and character of 18 year olds. I am more interested in their probability of success."

Several ALOs commented on their means of obtaining an accurate assessment of a candidate's character. These ALOs indicated that their methods of character assessment centered on seeking information from multiple sources other than the candidates themselves. Additional sources included community members familiar with the candidate, coaches, teachers, school principals, and the candidate's co-workers. Some of these ALOs stated:

- "You need to talk to references and community members to add depth to any character or moral issues."

- "I rely very heavily on coaches and extra curricular activities advisors for this type of input."

- "I sit and speak with a LOT of teachers, community people, etc., to get a full picture of the candidate. This is NOT a 'fast' or 'easy' process but it's ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL. I have been around long enough to gather input from teachers, principals, coaches, and etc."

In addition, other ALOs identified, in their survey responses, some other aspects they are specifically looking for as illustrated by the following comment:

- "I look for honesty and an awareness that learning most often comes at the heels of making a mistake. It is more difficult to assess an applicant who responds with textbook solutions. I am most impressed with those applicants that can readily admit to how hard it has been for them to make the right choices surrounding complex moral issues. Those who struggle the most are in my experience the ones who really think things through analytically to conclusion. That ability is a valuable asset worth nurturing in the leadership laboratory that is the US Air Force Academy."

ALOs as Advisors

Some ALOs clearly provide candidates with assistance well beyond the evaluation process. Those ALOs serve in the role of advisor as well. For example, one ALO described his discussions with candidates about character in the following statement: "I constantly try to bridge their civilian world with that of an active duty flying wing [by asking a question such as] 'What would happen if the pilot could not absolutely trust the word of his/her mechanic?' … [and explain] the military is by definition a dangerous business. Safety starts with your word." Another example was the following: "My [character] measurement is largely based on an article that I refer applicants to. It appeared in *The American Legion Magazine* a few years ago regarding a young female cadet … she wrote the article about her own travails as a second-class cadet, her dismissal for one semester, and successful return and graduation."

Challenges to the ALO's Responsibility to Evaluate Character

There are challenges in performing the critical role of screening for character on behalf of the Academy. ALOs cited a number of limiting factors concerning their ability to provide thorough character assessments. The most common constraint identified was the limited exposure they have to the candidates, frequently compounded by the limited time the ALOs, as volunteers, have to seek reliable information.[39]

- "I think all the [A]LOs do due diligence in trying to assess a person's character, but it's tough to do if you have only met a candidate three or four times."[40]

- "While I agree character should be measured, how exactly do we do that effectively? It requires way more time than most of us have available to do a proper job."

- "Given the number of schools and candidates (and miles) we cover, and the typically short period of time we have to work with candidates (only a few months during their senior year) it becomes nearly impossible to make accurate assessments of character."

Other ALOs commented on the problems associated with limited exposure to the candidate. For example, one ALO commented, "I feel that [A]LO assessments about the moral character of applicants are difficult to make. These high-achieving students know how to come across as

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[39] There were additional comments to the effect that these factors were exacerbated and not easily resolved due to the reliance on a voluntary and largely non-paid force.

[40] According to survey results, 76 percent of ALOs meet with their prospective candidates three or fewer times.

honest during an interview and they only form relatively shallow relationships with their [A]LOs. They've already formed behavioral patterns that allow them to get by. I believe most are who they say they are, but sometimes you just don't know."

As briefly discussed above, even those ALOs who perceived positively their ability to assess an individual's character indicated that the candidate interview, by itself, has limited utility in establishing an overall character assessment. "I call teachers, coaches, and employers to verify my assessment of a candidate's character. *I never rely on my opinion and only one other source* [emphasis added]. The questions in the candidate interview occasionally raise an alarm ('possible character flaw'), but can't really verify a person's character."

The ALO Composite Score

Beyond the challenge of making an accurate character assessment, some ALOs voiced concern about the reliability of the method used to convey that assessment to the Academy—the Form 4060. The ALOs principally were concerned about standardization and ratings inflation.[41]

Although there were some indications that attempts to standardize the process of obtaining information from the applicant to put on the Form 4060 have been made in the past, concerns about the consistency among ALOs persists. In the survey, ALOs voiced concerns about the precise expectations the Admissions Office has for completing the Form 4060. Some ALOs expressed confusion resulting from the disparate approaches to completing the Form 4060. There was concern that the inputs into the Form 4060 were not necessarily consistent from one region of the country to the next. Fundamentally, these ALOs question whether the Form 4060 can be relied on to ensure that candidates are being evaluated on the same criteria regardless of where the candidate resides. Given perceived disparities in the use of the Form 4060, there was some question as to whether it can be used fairly to assess a candidate's character. As one former Deputy Liaison Officer Director put it:

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[41] Our survey instrument was not designed to determine the statistical depth of this concern. All of these remarks came in the portion of the survey provided for open comments. However, we determined that this issue should be highlighted based on similar concerns emerging from multiple other research methods, including the Study Team's own review of deidentified admissions panel records, admission panel member comments, and an interview with a former AFROTC Professor of Aerospace Science who also used ALO interview results for AFROTC candidates.

> I have heard many ALOs express concern about what the Academy expects in a 4060. [A]LOs I've worked with in the past didn't want to take this issue on because even they weren't sure. The most consistent concern is how to write one. Some ALOs write wordy 4060s and get them through; others write bullet 4060s and have no problems; and others write very little and theirs go through. And yet, other ALOs will write one that appears to meet the requirements and have it rejected. The definition of what's expected in a 4060 seems to change from year to year.

Comments about ratings inflation focused primarily on ALOs' perceptions that many ALOs give out maximum ratings. One ALO commented, "I don't 'firewall' every 4060 like a lot of ALOs do because they don't want to be the reason a kid didn't get accepted. Too many ALOs are too concerned with their 'numbers' i.e. how many appointments they get every year." Another described how guidance regarding the rating system may drive ratings inflation because ALOs are advised that a 1 through 3 rating basically eliminates the candidates. Consequently, with only a 4 or 5 to differentiate between two candidates, the ALO must give the higher score in order not to eliminate the candidate.

"I get very upset with the Academy when they select students that I have ranked as a '4' and they don't select my '5' students. From my viewpoint, they are selecting students with the high ACT/SAT scores and not the whole person that I see."

The most serious concerns regarding the admissions process at the Academy, eliciting the strongest opinions, concerned the situation where the Academy offers a candidate an appointment against the advice of the ALO. According to the USAFA Admissions Office, all admitted candidates received at least an overall 3 in the past two years.

Some ALOs raised concerns that too much emphasis was given to academic scores and standardized test scores rather than character or the ALO's overall assessment.[42] For instance, some responses stated:

- "I would not put as much weight on the ACT and/or SAT scores. It seems like I will have an awesome candidate and they will not get selected because their ACT/SAT scores are not the highest."

- "We focus too much on grades and SAT scores and not enough on leadership, service and commitment to the ideals embraced by the Air Force."

- "… the Academy (is) guilty of the grade book mentality … national board scores, grades, class standing, sports, and awards."

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[42] Again, the ALO survey was not designed to determine the statistical depth of this perception. All of these remarks came in response to the opportunity to provide open comments. The Study Team determined it was worthy of mention based on other research sources identifying a similar perception, including members of the USAFA staff and leadership.

The Academy's Admissions Office Procedures

The Academy's Admissions Office performs a variety of functions, including supervising the activities of the ALOs; conducting orientation and training sessions for congressional offices; communicating with candidates and compiling admissions records; responding to requests for information about admissions from congressional staffers, liaison officers, and applicants; and conducting admissions panels that formally recommend a candidate for admission to the Academy.

Congressional offices, ALOs, faculty, and cadets widely praised the Admissions Office for its professionalism and responsiveness in carrying out these functions. During the congressional office interview process, a number of congressional staffers made a point of praising the Admissions Office. One staffer commented that "USAFA is most helpful [of all Service Academy Admissions Offices] and calls right away." The ALOs also volunteered positive comments regarding the USAFA Admissions Office.[43] The Study Team was similarly impressed with the responsiveness, knowledge, and professionalism of the USAFA admissions staff and leadership. We came away impressed with the immensity and constancy of the admissions process given the staffing available. Based on our review, we concluded that the Admissions Office could use more resources devoted to purely research and analytical functions. A dedicated staff of researchers could step back from the constant treadmill of the ongoing admissions process and assess current procedures, as well as keep an eye on emerging national developments in the admissions field and make research-supported recommendations for improvement of the USAFA admissions process.

The Study Team examined two Admissions Office functions in some detail: (1) pre-admissions communications with prospective candidates via marketing materials and (2) the conduct of the admissions panel itself in making admissions decisions.

The Study Team reviewed electronic and printed marketing materials available through the Academy's Admissions Office. We found these materials to be informative but somewhat dated. The most recent CD targeting high school students was produced in 1999,[44] prior to the implementation of ODS. Although there was no specific question regarding this topic in the ALO survey, several ALOs provided comments that, in their view, the Academy needed to update its marketing materials, not only in relation to other Service academies, but also compared to top civilian universities with which they compete for top high school students.

Each year, USAFA convenes two admissions panels to review applicant files and accept or reject candidates. Each panel has eight or nine members (including the chairperson) representing each of the Academy's mission elements. The chairperson is a colonel, while most of the panel

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[43] Typical of those comments was the following: "The staff and officers in the USAFA Admissions Office are top rate! They are always willing to help and very prompt at answering my questions."

[44] There was some confusion regarding the exact date: the CD reviewed by the Study Team was dated 1996; we relied on the different date provided by the USAFA admissions office.

members are lieutenant colonels and majors. The two panels meet once a week to review completed files.

In contrast to USMA, USNA, and USAF ROTC scholarship board procedures, each candidate's file is reviewed by only a single panel member. There is no discussion regarding a candidate's file, except when requested by a panel member. The Admissions Office trains panel members and calibrates for consistent scoring using mock records before they evaluate applicants' files.

Candidate files include a variety of admissions-related records, as well as correspondence to and from a candidate. At a minimum, the candidate's folder includes the following required items:

- *Form 4060 Candidate Evaluation,* completed by the ALO. Up to 600 points may be awarded based on the ALO assessment. 40 extra points may be awarded for strong positive comments by the ALO.

- *USAFA Form O-878, USAFA Candidate Writing Sample*. Candidates are required to compose responses to four questions.[45]

- *USAFA Form 145, School Official's Evaluation of Candidate*. This form is completed by a candidate's English, math, and chemistry/physics instructors. This is the first year that the Academy has used this form. References rate the applicant on a variety of characteristics, including integrity, on a Likert Scale of "Top 1%," "Top 10%," "Above Average," "Average," "Below Average," and "Not Observed" compared to other students in the class or school, as appropriate. The form also requires written comments on the candidate's academic performance and requests the teacher's comment on the candidate's character and integrity, although very little space is provided for these combined comments. Panel members report that some responses on these forms reflect surprising candor. They also indicated that it was too early, from their perspective, to determine the overall value of the form as a screening tool.

As discussed earlier, a significant portion of the overall candidate scoring is objective and relies on a composite score based on the candidate's high school transcript, standardized tests (for the academic composite) and athletic, as well as non-athletic, extracurricular activities (for the extracurricular composite). These composite scores are compiled before the admissions panel review of the candidate folder. Panel members individually fill out scoring sheets (USAFA Form O-379) for the admissions panel portion of the candidate's overall score. The chairperson reviews and reconciles any disconnects and has the ultimate say, including the power to override members' ratings.

Although the admissions panel's composite score consists of 20 percent of a candidate's overall scores, the ALOs' comments and interview score generated from the Form 4060 are factored into

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[45] (1) Why do you want to attend the Air Force Academy? (2) What do you consider your greatest success? (3) Which personal quality do you think should form the foundation of an officer's character? Talk about an experience that helped form that quality in you. (4) Describe a challenge that you have overcome. What did you learn from that experience and how did it make you a better leader?

the Admissions Panel Composite Score. The ALO score represents the vast majority of points available and awarded in the Admissions Panel Review.[46] *Consequently, the total number of discretionary points available to and awarded by panel members ends up being very small and as a result has a negligible impact on the candidate's overall score.* Deidentified admissions records reviewed by the Study Team received from 0 to 90 discretionary points, with the average awarded being 40. Assuming a perfect ALO score of 600, the average discretionary point total awarded by the admissions panel represents less than two percent of the candidates' overall composite score.[47]

> Consequently, the total number of discretionary points available to and awarded by panel members ends up being very small and as a result has a negligible impact on the candidate's overall score.

As a result of the record review, a panel member awards a letter—A for definitely Admit, W for Wait, and D for Deny admission—and a numerical score associated with each category. If there are obvious discrepancies in a file, the panel chairperson brings it to the attention of Admissions Office personnel.

All candidates are ranked according to their point total. Consequently, it is possible that a "Wait" candidate can score higher than an "Admit" candidate. To avoid anomalies, adjustments are made once the ranking is done. There is negotiation regarding congressionally nominated candidates. If a congressional nominee is "Waited" or "Denied," the Admissions Office discusses the candidate's rating with the congressional nominator. The admissions office may suggest prep school attendance, but a Congressman can override the Academy's rating, allowing a principal "Wait" or "Deny" candidate to be admitted.

Admissions Panels' Evaluations of Character

In interviews, admissions panel members admitted that character is difficult to evaluate from the review of a paper file. From the perspective of one admissions panel chairman, the best opportunity for character assessment would be to interview each applicant. Since that is not feasible, they must rely on the character evaluation from the ALOs. Because ALOs conduct face-to-face interviews with the candidate, they are in the best position to make character judgments.

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[46] USAFA Form O-379 provides for the following potential point totals: USAFA Form 4060 (ALO Candidate Evaluation), 600 points. Maximum available discretionary points and their categories are Notable Liaison Officer Comments, 40 points; Writing Sample, 40; Teacher Comments (Form 145), 15; Letters of Recommendation, 40; Notable Accomplishments, 40; and undetermined points for Compelling Interest. In addition, the admissions counselor will annotate whether the candidate has USAFA or other Service academy affiliation and award 40 points for USAFA affiliation and 20 points for other Service academy affiliation.

[47] This notional computation is based on a total admissions panel score of 640 points (600 ALO, 40 discretionary) representing 20 percent of the overall composite.

Nevertheless, the Chairman acknowledged that the nature and quality of ALO comments vary widely because there is so much disparity in the quality of the ALOs. The admissions panel Chairman felt that the character assessment piece could be more consistent and uniform, with more education, training, or manuals to promote standardization. Another admissions panel member commented that it would also help to have someone who knew the applicant best comment on character, rather than just rely on input from teachers. Some admissions panel members, while acknowledging the importance of character evaluation, voiced concern that too much emphasis could be placed on character at the expense of grades and other objective measures.

Candidates' Privacy Interests

The Academy's admissions staff and admissions panel members identified one significant limitation to obtaining candid character-related data from letters of recommendations and teacher evaluation forms. Letters of recommendation and teacher evaluation forms are available to an applicant under the Freedom of Information Act, which allows applicants to obtain letters of recommendation that are sometimes submitted to the Academy in confidence. Consequently, references are increasingly reluctant to put negative comments about applicants in writing for fear of a lawsuit. While teacher evaluation forms allow teachers to request confidentiality with respect to their comments, according to Academy admissions officials they cannot guarantee the confidentiality of such reports. It should be noted, however, that ALO comments are protected by law.

Assessment Instruments

Several admissions panel members voiced doubts that any psychological or character assessment instruments would be of value to the panel. Even if the instruments are legal, the panel members believed that these instruments can be "gamed." They also felt that such testing requires huge expense to the administrator. There is the perception that training evaluators creates an expense that would far outweigh the benefits that any instrument might provide.

All sources and participants in the Study generally felt that there is no silver bullet for screening for character. Rather, character assessment is best done by a combination of indirect measures taken from multiple perspectives.

> All sources and participants in the Study generally felt that there is no silver bullet for screening for character. Rather, character assessment is best done by a combination of indirect measures taken from multiple perspectives.

VI. Admissions

Admissions Findings, Discussions, and Recommendations

Overall Assessment

The Study Team found that no information obtained or available during the admissions process could have predicted subsequent character-related misconduct of applicants. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that information available on current cadets supports the perception that they are exceptional young men and women with solid character and a desire to serve their country. In addition, our research confirmed that the USAFA admissions office, the ALOs, and the congressional offices all approach their admissions-related responsibilities very professionally and conscientiously. Moreover, the Study Team noted recent USAFA efforts to improve the emphasis on character in the admissions process through such actions as revising USAFA Form O-878, "USAF Academy Candidate Writing Sample," to require candidates to address character-related questions and including a request on the USAFA Form 145, "School Official's Evaluation of Candidate," for high school instructors to comment on candidates' character. Furthermore, we believe that ALOs perform an essential role in recruiting, motivating, and evaluating candidates.

Beyond the factors cited above, the arduous and challenging nature of the admissions process itself provides a degree of innate character assessment. The motivation and willingness of candidates to seek nomination and admission to a Service academy requires exhibiting positive character attributes. Finally, we reiterate our position that because character is developmental, the principal function of the admissions process is to ensure an appropriate level of character and the capacity and commitment to continue developing their character while at the Academy.

While reading the following discussion, readers should keep in mind the Study Team's overall positive assessment of the admissions processes and the USAFA Admissions Office. The recommendations below focus on improving the admissions processes by designing it to most usefully serve the "input" function described at the outset of this study as part of a truly integrated ODS. However, it would be inaccurate and unfair to conclude, based on the weight of our comments, that we came away with an overall negative impression of the admissions process. As described above, our overall assessment of USAFA admissions is quite positive.

That said, we found rationale, on the basis of both a need and opportunity, to make changes to the USAFA admissions process to optimize its utility for the future. This rationale is driven by two primary factors: first, there is an increasing sense among many observers that there is a growing gap between the values of youth today (reflecting contemporary American societal values) and those values and character expectations required by USAFA and the Air Force. As one example, many researchers have concluded that there is increasingly an "entitlement mentality" prevalent among youth today.[48] This value conflicts with service to others before self

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[48] As just one example of this perspective, according to a column in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (May 2, 2003): "Students are more apathetic, more infected with an unwarranted sense of entitlement, more lacking in basic civility, and more downright rude and abusive than they've ever been in the history of American education."

and similar values expected and required by USAFA and USAF. As a result, certain threshold values that may have been taken for granted in the past can no longer be assumed. For these reasons, there is the need to strengthen character assessment of candidates within the USAFA admissions process.

Second, and just as important, there is the opportunity to leverage the strengths of the admissions process to begin providing an introduction to ODS. Thus, the admissions process, while not the root problem for character-related issues, can contribute to the solution by serving as a valuable entry point to character expectations and the ODS at USAFA. In other words, the admissions process can contribute to an integrated comprehensive approach to developing leaders of character by setting appropriate expectations in the minds of the candidates from first contact all the way to accepted candidates' taking the oath upon arrival for Basic Cadet Training.

Accordingly, we offer findings and recommendations for obtaining more useful character-related data and information on prospective candidates and for optimizing the use of that information within the admissions process. Next, and perhaps more important, we suggest ways that the admissions process can be used to begin the conditioning process that is intended to narrow the gap between the cadet's initial value system and that required by ODS and that of future Air Force officers. This latter should be identified as the top goal and priority for the admissions process.

General Recommendations

The following recommendations touch on both of the objectives identified above: (1) using the admissions process to begin the "conditioning" process and (2) strengthening the character evaluation in the existing admissions process.

Finding: USAFA's expectations regarding character are not clearly defined or described in the application and admissions process.

Discussion: In general, those involved in the admissions process (ALOs, congressional staffers, and those writing letters of recommendation) do not have a consistent understanding of the Academy's expectations regarding character. If the Academy defines and explains what it means by the word *character*, then applicants, ALOs, congressional offices, and others providing written input for the admissions process will be more closely aligned regarding an applicant's character.

Recommendation A1: *Define, describe, and explain the importance of character and communicate it to USAFA staff involved in the admissions process, ALOs, authors of letters of recommendation, and congressional offices and their interview panels or boards*.

Finding: As briefly discussed, we concluded that the Admissions Office was insufficiently resourced for purely research and analytical admissions functions.

Discussion: Many, if not most, leading academic institutions have a staff that conducts research and analysis for their admissions offices. In our view, resourcing the already knowledgeable and

well-led admissions staff with analysts dedicated to the purposes we set forth above will yield significant dividends for USAFA.

Recommendation A2: *Increase the ongoing research and analysis capabilities of the Air Force Academy Directorate of Admissions by adding a staff of two full-time analysts.*

Finding: Several interviewees and survey respondents suggested that USAFA ought to reexamine and carefully define what type of cadet is most desirable to attend USAFA.

Discussion: Interviewees question whether the smartest cadets will make the best leaders.[49] For example, one ALO's perspective was "We are missing individuals that mature later in their high school education who are true leaders." One faculty member commented, "The mistake is that USAFA is taking cadets with 1400s on their SATs. There is too much focus on academics … USAFA should be looking for greater breadth of experience."

Other interviewees and observers were just as strongly defending the emphasis on academic credentials and were concerned that the focus on character might overcome these objective criteria. From their point of view, character is developmental and "we should be a little more realistic about our own ability to draw conclusions about character from applicant interviews … they are generally very young, lacking (fortunately, for them) significant experience wrestling with moral dilemmas. I expect them to know the difference between right and wrong; the rest I leave to the Academy to inculcate." Admissions panel members, in the main, felt that the cadets are generally of high character and quality and that, while character evaluation should be a concern, it does not represent an epidemic problem.

Recommendation A3: *Evaluate and clearly identify what type of cadets USAFA seeks for the future.*

Recommendation A4: *Collaborate with the other Service academies on updating the* Congressional Guide for Admission to the United States Service Academies *to significantly strengthen the discussion on the importance of character. Identify the Service academies' view of the important role congressional offices can play in assisting with the conditioning of the candidate on the character expectations of the Service academies. Identify the benefits a congressional interview panel can play in this regard.*

Strengthen Character Evaluation During the Admissions Process

As described above, USAFA has made recent efforts to increase the emphasis on character in the admissions process. Nevertheless, the emphasis on academics still clearly overshadows character evaluation in the admissions process. Consequently, academics rather than character is most prominent in the application process and in the minds of candidates before they enter the Academy. USAFA should build on the positive actions it has taken to date by taking the following additional actions aimed at improving character evaluation.

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[49] Interestingly, USAFA's own statistics indicate that the institution has produced many more doctors than generals.

The Study Team has acknowledged that we found no silver bullet for character evaluation during our research, and the recommendations below clearly do not represent such a solution. Rather, we found that effective character evaluation is based on gaining multiple perspectives on a given individual. The recommendations outlined below are designed to gain those perspectives while maximizing the particular admissions tools and processes to most effectively evaluate these perspectives.

Finding: The numerical dominance of the ALO score certainly means that the role of USAFA admissions panel members during the admissions panel review is negligible, especially when compared with other admissions panels reviewed by the Study Team.

Discussion: The Study Team found that the current USAFA admissions panel review is almost completely dominated by the numerical interview score provided by the ALO before the admissions panel convenes. In our review of deidentified admissions panel records, we saw evidence that this factor likely results in only a cursory review of other contributors to assessing the candidate's character.[50] We believe that admissions panels that are able to review the multiple inputs available on a particular candidate are in the best position to make a character and suitability assessment of the whole person. Giving the admissions panel members additional weight also would serve as a useful mitigation mechanism to an overly favorable or unfavorable assessment by a particular ALO. For that reason, USAFA should rework the scoring of candidates' records to afford a more significant role to the staff and faculty at USAFA who constitute admissions panel members.

Recommendation A5: *Empower the admissions panel with more influence in the admissions process by either revising the ALO interview Form 4060 or revising the overall weight of the inputs from admissions panels (USAFA Form O-379). Reduce the content of the candidate folders reviewed by the admissions panel to focus primarily on character-related content. Ensure that a representative from the Center for Character Development serves as a member of each admissions panel. Adopt a review process similar to that of other Service academies and the USAF ROTC scholarship boards, where each panel member reviews and scores each record.*

Finding: Currently, USAFA considers but does not require letters of recommendation.

Discussion: The inevitable result is that some records have such letters of recommendation while others do not. We believe that USAFA should move back to requiring letters of recommendation from sources and in a form similar to those required at its origin. In 1958, USAFA required letters from a clergy member, a businessperson, and an educator. Although we do not suggest duplicating these same requirements, in our view requiring letters from sources who know the candidate best will come closer to achieving inputs related to the intended character and ODS outcomes. Of note, we briefly examined requirements of other prestigious institutions for letters of recommendation; they typically relied on "those very familiar with" the candidate.

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[50] As just one example of this, the highest scored record among those we reviewed had a very low evaluation from USAFA's Summer Seminar.

Although we realize that the USAFA Form 145 was just implemented, several factors contributed to our recommendation that USAFA revise or eliminate the form. The requirement that these forms be completed by only math, chemistry/physics, and English teachers and that comments be limited to academic performance sends a message, intended or not, that academics, not character, is the dominant rationale for this form. In our view, input for an academic purpose contributes little to that already available to USAFA from transcripts and standardized tests that are summarized in the candidate's academic composite. In addition, the "request" for comments on character in the small box also used for the academic potential comments appears to contribute little to character evaluation, except in the rarest of circumstances. Finally, the 15 points awarded by the admissions panel are so negligible within the large scheme of admissions that even non-required items have more points possible than the required teacher forms. Even with this low number of points, only three of eight deidentified admissions records we reviewed had any points awarded at all, and the highest number awarded was five points. Presumably, at least some of these points were awarded for non-character reasons, such as the teachers' comments regarding the candidates' potential in their respective disciplines. For these reasons, we recommend that USAFA eliminate the form.

Recommendation A6: *Require letters of recommendation from three persons who have a relationship with the candidate and can comment on the candidate's character.* This may include coaches, clergy, employers, professionals, businesspersons, community leaders, educators, and former or current military officers, especially USAF. Either revise the existing USAFA Form 145, "School Official's Evaluation of Candidate," to support this requirement, or eliminate it.

Finding: According to Admissions Office officials, USAFA cannot guarantee the confidentiality of sources for letters of recommendation even for those who request it.

Discussion: This is obviously of concern, as it is axiomatic that candid assessments are vital to any endeavor to gain reliable character information from a particular source. Candid assessments are substantially less likely to occur without some assurance of confidentiality.

Recommendation A7: *Ensure confidentiality of sources for character information on candidates.* Request that candidates sign a waiver form relinquishing their right to review letters of recommendation provided on their behalf. In the alternative, seek legislative relief from legal requirements to release information originating from individuals providing data aimed at determining a candidate's character for Service academy admissions.

Finding: The candidate essay is called the "USAF Academy Candidate Writing Sample."

Discussion: Labeling the admissions essay a writing sample leads one to believe that the focus of this effort is on how well one writes, not on the substantive responses to the questions. In contrast, other Service academies call their admissions essay requirements "Personal Statements." We recommend that USAFA go further and clearly and unambiguously articulate what it is that it wants the candidate to deliver and what USAFA intends to evaluate. One example would be "Character and Commitment Statement." There are some good questions on the existing essay, and in our review of deidentified records we found some compelling answers

to them, most particularly to question 4, which asks the candidates to describe challenges they have overcome.

Recommendation A8: *Revise the existing candidate essay requirement in both title and content. Tie at least some portion of the essay requirement to a review of a character-related reading or video provided by the admissions staff. Migrate to web-based performance—log on to the site and have a school official or ALO administer the essay submission.*

Finding: A significant number of ALO survey respondents indicated a desire for more and better education and training for their role in assessing character.

Discussion: The Academy's ALO cadre is well established and serves an essential role in recruiting and counseling candidates. In addition, our research clearly showed that ALOs place a priority on and genuinely care about accurately assessing the character of candidates. The Academy should continue to build on the strengths, commitment, and success of ALOs.

Recommendation A9: *Enhance the ability of ALOs to assess candidates for character and suitability for performance at the Academy and service as an Air Force officer through enhanced training. Provide a "best practices" portal on the ALO web for exchange of ideas on the most effective ways to screen candidates.*

Finding: Congressional offices were universally open to receiving more guidance from USAFA and the other Service academies on ways their processes could be modified to be helpful for the academies.

Discussion: The Academy should leverage this interest to partner with Congress to improve the admissions process.

Recommendation A10: *During training and orientation sessions, regularly distribute best practices used by congressional offices for candidate evaluation and nomination.*

Finding: ALOs' relationship with congressional staffs varies in frequency and quality and should be improved.

Discussion: The Congressional Liaison Officer in each area should continue to serve in a coordinating role, and ALOs in each area should have direct interaction with congressional offices. It is important that both the congressional nomination process and Academy admissions process continue to provide independent appraisals of candidates' character.

Recommendation A11: *Strengthen and increase relationships between ALOs and congressional offices, in particular the staffers responsible for managing the nomination process for Members of Congress.*

Begin the "Conditioning" Process

Finding: The admissions process can more effectively condition applicants on the importance of character, what character is, and what is expected of them while at the Academy and once commissioned.

Discussion: The admissions process is the first contact prospective cadets have with the Air Force Academy. Accordingly, it has great potential value not just as a screening mechanism, but also as a tool to clearly define expectations and to begin the conditioning process to Air Force values. Admissions can realize its potential as the "input" for a truly integrated ODS model by adopting the following recommendations.

Recommendation A12: *Revise the language of the USAFA admissions process to reflect that of the ODS and of commissioning suitability with specific components for administrative, competency, and character.*

Recommendation A13: *Revise existing or create new marketing and recruiting materials to emphasize Air Force values generally and character specifically.*

Recommendation A14: *Require candidates to review a reading (or video) provided by USAFA that both introduces character traits required of an Air Force officer and sets the stage for evaluation of the candidate's comment and reflection on character traits.*

Recommendation A15: *Enhance the post-admission package by designing a post-admissions orientation program that begins narrowing the gap between the candidate's initial value system and that expected by USAFA. ALOs could contribute to this process by following up with the candidate following his or her receipt of this package.*

Recommendation A16: *Emphasize to Members of Congress and their staffs the value they can add to Service academy efforts to condition prospective candidates by also communicating the importance of character in their literature and handouts.*

VI. Admissions

VII. The Officer Development System
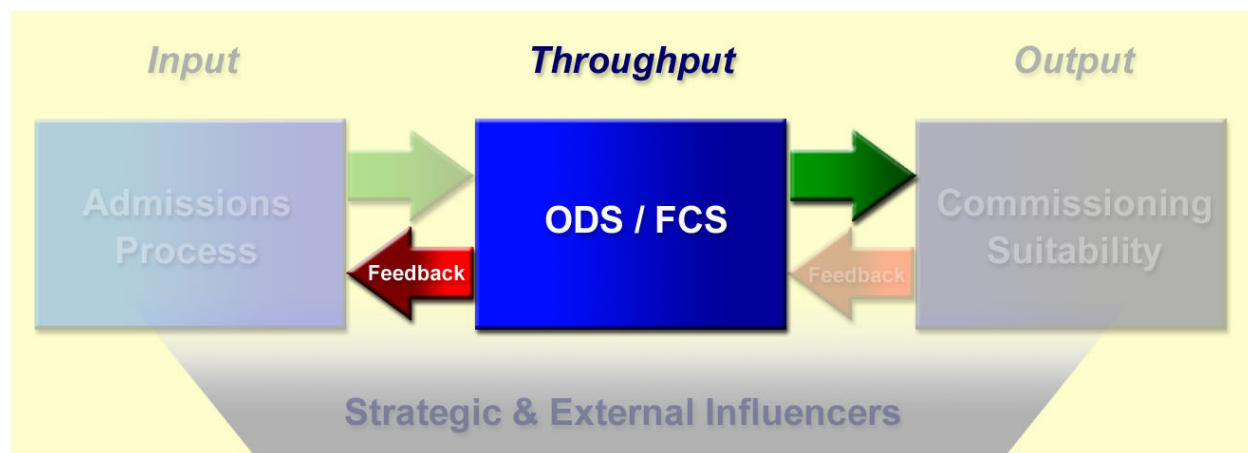
ODS is about changing hearts and minds. In four years, this needs to be done deliberately and intentionally and it is everyone' responsibility to do this.

—Dr. Rolf Enger, USAFA Center for Educational Excellence

Introduction

This section begins with a discussion of ODS. We believe that, if done right, ODS can yield a broad set of desirable outcomes, ranging from enhanced intra- and interpersonal competence to improved academic motivation and performance. Done badly, it can be no more effective than the approach to cadet development it replaced. As requested, the Team has examined ODS to determine the extent that it has been intentionally and seamlessly woven into the Academy's pedagogy and daily routines or whether it is regarded as an add-on.

To develop leaders of character, ODS focuses on development of six domains of a cadet's life. Three are identified as competency related[51] and three as character related.[52] For this discussion, we intentionally make a sharp distinction between the "competency" dimensions of a cadet's life (intellectual, professional, and physical) and the "character" dimensions (spiritual, ethical, and social). These dimensions are interrelated in actual practice.

The Team also identifies and discusses, in this section, the organizational frameworks through which ODS is implemented. It is felt that this somewhat lengthy discussion of ODS and its related concepts is warranted for two reasons: First, the Team perceived a lack of uniform execution of the ODS framework across mission elements.[53] Second, the Team believes that the

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[51] Competencies refer to the intellectual, professional, and physical dimensions of a cadet's life.

[52] Character refers to the ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions of a cadet's life.

[53] Mission elements refer to the academic programs, the military programs, and physical programs that make up the Academy experience.

lack of uniform execution of the ODS framework across mission elements represents one of the most significant challenges facing the Academy in its attempts at organizational and cultural transformation.

Because uniform execution of ODS and its related concepts is so important, we identify five major character and leadership development processes that should be the focus of integration efforts. While these processes are not exclusive to character and leadership development, they are used across mission elements, have the greatest developmental impact, and are rich in assessment, challenge, and support. Consequently, the Team believes that these processes must be the focus of the institutional integration office's[54] efforts to integrate ODS across mission elements.

This section concludes with our specific findings and recommendations for improving the cadet developmental processes consistent with what we believe is the intent of ODS. Our recommendations are designed to assist USAF and USAFA decision makers in effectively refining and sustaining ODS.[55] As requested, and where appropriate, we have attempted to leverage our findings and recommendations by highlighting their applicability to other commissioning sources.

What We Were Asked to Do

We were asked by Air Force leadership to determine whether

- ODS is being implemented as intended.

- The right programs and practices are in place to develop cadets into officers and leaders of character.

- The programs and practices that make up ODS are working as they should. If not, what should be done to improve them?

- The current ODS delegates enough responsibility to cadets to allow them to demonstrate their suitability for commissioning.

- The length and content of the "doolie" period is adequate to indoctrinate cadets into the Cadet Wing and life at the Academy.

Methodology

The Study Team approached its evaluation of the officer development processes at the Academy by examining the "content" of ODS, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing developmental programs (that is, "the throughput" of ODS), and "benchmarking" the content and

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[54]The Academy recently created an institutional integration office as part of the reorganization of its Department of Plans (XP). We understand that this office will be responsible for integration of ODS across mission elements and will report to the Superintendent.

[55] Note that the recommendations tend to be brief. We provide an action plan for the recommendations in Annex 2.

processes of ODS across business, industry, and academia to identify and recommend best practices.

Our in-depth examination of ODS allowed us to get a comprehensive view of the Academy's character and leadership development processes and how those processes compare to similar processes across business, industry, and academia.

The Study Team spent nearly eight months at the Academy,[56] interviewing personnel with primary roles in the conception and design of ODS, as well as those who have been responsible for its execution and have experienced it. During our investigation at the Academy, the Study Team

- Attended Basic Cadet Training

- Conducted focus groups with cadets, staff, and faculty

- Interviewed personnel at the Cadet Counseling Center

- Spent several days participating in the Center for Character Development's character and leadership enrichment programs

- Interviewed Academy leadership (the Superintendent and his staff, the Commandant and his staff, most of the AOCs, group staff, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Director of Athletics)

- Interviewed other key personnel who model, coach, mentor, and teach cadets

- Interviewed individuals who developed ODS

- Evaluated all aspects of ODS, including
  - Benchmarking ODS against similar frameworks at other Service academies and private military academies
  - Benchmarking the Academy's formal character and leadership programs against character and leadership programs in other Services, as well as across business, industry, and academia
  - Comparing ODS against ROTC and OTS programs

The Study Team examined all facets of ODS as closely as possible to ascertain how ODS was being perceived, understood, and executed by staff, faculty, and cadets. Interviews were conducted onsite to gain insight into the sphere of influence and environments of those interviewed. Programs were scrutinized to help us to better understand character and leadership development in general, as well as to compare and contrast approaches to character and leadership development with those being executed at other Service academies.

We also spent several days interviewing subject matter experts and leaders at the

- U.S. Military Academy

- U.S. Naval Academy

- U.S. Coast Guard Academy

- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

- Air Force Reserve Officer Training Command

- Air Force OTS

- Air University and other Air Force education and professional development programs

The ODS Process

> The problem with the old Fourth Class System is that it was analog leadership in a digital world.
>
> —USAFA AOC

The Academy promises those admitted that it will transform them into Air Force officers and leaders of character. The Academy accomplishes that transformation through a developmental framework described as the ODS. This framework is designed, among other things, to

- Motivate cadets to action by appealing to higher ideals and moral values

- Define and articulate a vision of the future

- Form a base of credibility[57]

Embedded in the ODS framework are developmental techniques that help ensure this transformation. ODS reflects a subtle but important shift in organizational focus from doing things right to doing the right things (that is, process specialization).

ODS is consistent with the enduring strategic concepts that have always been at the heart of the USAFA experience. Then, as now, those strategic *concepts* have guided Academy leadership to design policies, processes, and programs by which cadets are educated, trained, and developed. Consistent with the original vision for the Academy, the intention has always been to graduate cadets with the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of officers in the Air Force and to graduate leaders of character—"*a group which can be relied upon to form the hard-core of the Air Force in peace or in war*" (emphasis added).[58]

ODS touches every dimension of a cadet's life—intellectual, professional, physical, spiritual, ethical, and social—during four years at the Academy.[59] While the intent of ODS is to develop

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[56] See Annex 16 for a complete list of sources.

[57] U.S. Air Force Academy Cadet Wing Manual 36-3501, "The Cadet Sight Picture," § 1.6.3 (March 2004).

[58] See comments of General Harmon.

[59] The current FCS is a contrast to the Academy's previous training philosophy (the Academy Training Philosophy and Fourth Class System, which primarily emphasized development of fourth-class cadets).

all six dimensions,[60] the focus is on character and leadership development. ODS is intended to prepare cadets for a career of continual professional development and service to the Air Force and the Nation with three goals in mind:

- Develop each cadet's appreciation that being an Air Force officer is a noble way of life

- Foster a commitment to character-based officership

- Develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities essential to his or her identity as a character-based officer-leader

USAFA organizes the developmental sequencing of cadet education and training within a PITO (personal, interpersonal, team, and organizational) framework. The Academy develops cadets within this framework using an FCS.[61] The FCS facilitates cadet development each year by providing progressively more difficult challenges and responsibilities within a traditional four-year college education and training environment. Under the PITO framework, activities first focus on individual development before migrating toward an increased emphasis on interpersonal, team, and organizational character and leadership skills.

The FCS organizes leadership development activities in the Leadership Growth Model around four key considerations:[62]

1. Expectation and inspiration

2. Instruction

3. Feedback

4. Reflection

The Leadership Growth Model assists mission elements in designing programs that develop cadets across the six dimensions of a cadet's life to produce the four attributes of officership that result in the ten ODS outcomes and eight character outcomes. See Figure 7 below.

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[60] Three of these dimensions emphasize *competence* (intellectual, professional, and physical) and three focus on *character* (spiritual, ethical, and social).

[61] In the FCS, fourth-class cadets focus on personal leadership attributes. They are "followers" who learn and live loyalty to Air Force core values, standards, missions, and the chain of command. Third-class cadets focus on interpersonal leadership skills. They serve as role models and excel at watching out for the upper two classes. They coach fourth-classmen in the ways of the loyal follower. Second-class cadets focus on team leadership and are the loyal followers of their leaders. They develop the third-classmen to become workers and mentors, and they train fourth-classmen as loyal followers. First-class cadets focus on organizational leadership. They develop their second-class workers and mentors, shape third-class role modeling, and inspire the fourth-classmen in loyal followership.

[62] The Academy refers to this process as the Leadership Growth Model.

VII. The Officer Development System
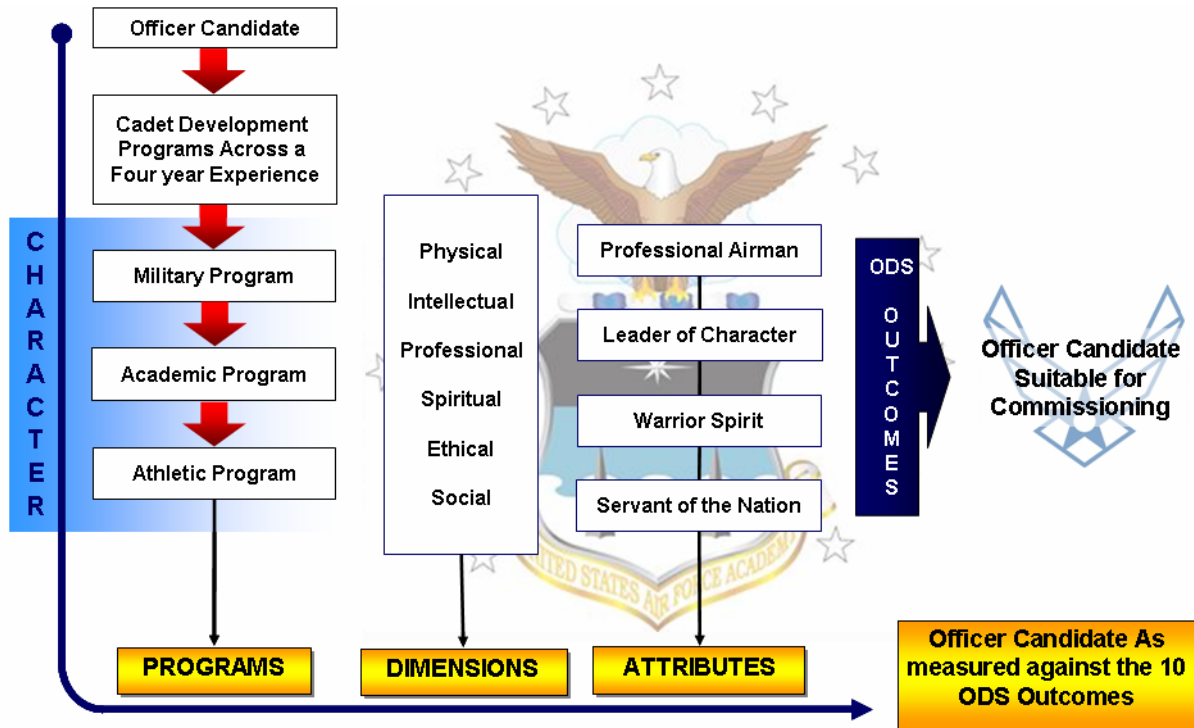
Figure 7: Character Development.

ODS[63] and its associated concepts are based loosely on frameworks in place at other Service academies, particularly the U.S. Military Academy, which uses a Cadet Leadership Development System. Like that system, ODS is a *comprehensive* process intended to synchronize and integrate cadet character and leadership developmental activities across each of the three mission elements.

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[63] The ODS is designed to produce officers

1. With integrity who are selflessly committed to service to their country through personal and professional excellence
2. Who possess a breadth of integrated knowledge across the academic disciplines and the military profession that support the Air Force mission
3. Who are decisive leaders with the stamina, courage, and discipline to build and inspire high-performing teams in demanding, dynamic environments
4. Who appreciate the significance of their own spiritual development, accept the beliefs of others, and foster mutual respect and dignity among all individuals
5. Who make sound decisions grounded in the fundamentals of air and space power in a joint environment
6. Who promote the dynamic relationships between leaders and followers through effective communication
7. Who can use their understanding of global relationships, cultures, and languages to effectively employ air and space power
8. Who will apply their knowledge and skills to meet the present and future challenges of the military profession
9. Who demonstrate an unquenchable thirst for personal and professional development
10. Who are motivated toward a lifetime of national service

VII. The Officer Development System

Obstacles to a Uniform Execution of ODS Across All Mission Elements

> Before we change the culture, we need to figure out what kind of culture we want.
>
> —USAFA faculty member

The rapidity with which ODS was designed and implemented, combined with the absence of a staff-level integration office, has inhibited a uniform execution of ODS across mission elements.[64] Since the adoption of ODS, each mission element has been left on its own to design and implement character and leadership development activities as each sees fit.

Each mission element, however, brings its own unique perspectives, capabilities, definitions of key terms, and/or biases about ODS. While these unique points of view have been valuable to the evolution of ODS, they also have reinforced long-standing "stove-piping" of program design and implementation.

Furthermore, the generality of the ten ODS outcomes and eight character outcomes, as well as the ambiguous nature of the 12 principles guiding design of developmental activities within ODS[65] have left mission elements to assume that ODS is simply *any* undertaking that purportedly develops the cadet. See Figure 8.

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[64] During our Study, the Academy did create a staff level integration office dedicated to ensure that the agreed upon concepts that drive character and leadership development activities are synchronized and integrated across mission elements.

[65] The 12 guiding principles of ODS provide:
1. Align all aspects of the USAFA experience with accepted USAF Practices;
2. Create depth of expertise sequentially and progressively based on a cadet's developmental level—meet tem where they are and move them to where they need to be;
3. Integrate and coordinate all education and training experiences to meet ODS outcomes;
4. Use goal-oriented and standards-based approaches to build skill-set expertise;
5. Strike an appropriate balance between quality and quantity of development experiences;
6. Establish both a common core of experiences and multiple paths to the same outcome;
7. Couple adequate support with every challenge: tailor every challenge to each cadet always understanding cadets are at different places developmentally;
8. Emphasize cadet ownership and accountability for their own development—allow cadets to make significant decisions;
9. Prepare cadets to expect, embrace and handle change and adversity;
10. Involve all cadets, faculty and staff in the implementation and use of the ODS;
11. Assess the effectiveness of training and educational processes; and
12. Ensure all leaders and followers gain from every developmental experience to include both successes and failures.

- **ODS Outcomes**
- 1. ... **with integrity who are selflessly committed to service to their country through personal and professional excellence.**
- 2. ... who possess a breadth of integrated knowledge across the academic disciplines and the military profession that support
- the Air Force mission.
- 3. ... who are **decisive leaders** with the **stamina, courage, and discipline** to build and inspire high-performing **teams in demanding, dynamic environments.**
- 4. ... **who appreciate the significance of their own spiritual development, accept the beliefs of others,** and **foster mutual respect and dignity** among all individuals.
- 5. ... who **make sound decisions** grounded in the fundamentals of air and space power in a joint environment.
- 6. ... who promote the dynamic relationship between leaders and followers through effective communication.
- 7. ... who can use their understanding of global relationships, cultures, and languages to effectively employ air and space
- power.
- 8. ... who will apply their knowledge and skills to meet the present and future challenges of the military profession.
- 9. ... who demonstrate an unquenchable desire for personal and professional development.
- 10. ... who are motivated toward a lifetime of national service.

- **Character Outcomes**
- a. Have forthright **integrity** and voluntarily decide the right thing to do and do it.
- b. Are **selfless in service to the country, the Air Force and their subordinates**
- c. Are **committed to excellence in the performance of their personal and professional responsibilities**
- d. **Respect the dignity of all human beings**
- e. **Are decisive**, even facing high risk
- f. Take full responsibility for their decisions
- g. Have the **self-discipline, stamina and courage** to do their duty well **under even the extreme and prolonged conditions of national defense**
- h. **Appreciate the significance of spiritual values and beliefs to their own character development and that of the community.**

NOTE: Bold print identified commonalities between the outcomes

Figure 8. Comparison Chart

Consequently, mission elements can claim that their existing programs and activities are consistent with ODS, masking real differences in the developmental effectiveness of some of these activities. This has two results:

- Many mission elements fit ODS to their programs and conclude, "We are already doing this," and see no need to change; it encourages resistance to change.

- This works against prioritizing scarce resources. If all programs are equally valuable, mission elements will hesitate to eliminate their programs.

The continued success of ODS requires an overarching institutional agreement on truly effective developmental programs and activities. The Team firmly believes that an institutional integration office can reduce or eliminate stove-piping and facilitate alignment of the perspectives about ODS that exist across mission elements. For an institutional integration office to be effective, however, the components of the Academy's ODS strategy and how it is to be executed must be clear, focused, and translated consistently across mission elements. That is not the case at present.

The integration office we envision must be empowered to execute the Academy's clear expectations for character and leadership developmental programs and activities across mission elements. Based on the guidance from this institutional integration office, mission elements can establish short-, medium-, and long-term objectives on their own and assess progress toward

them. The institutional integration office, however, must continuously monitor the execution of the Academy's strategy to thwart potential problems created by different or competing views regarding execution of ODS. Only with such oversight will ODS character and leadership developmental programs and activities be synchronized and integrated across mission elements.

Refining Institutional Agreement on Leaders of Character

One of the biggest impediments to an institutional agreement on the execution of ODS is the lack of a clear and uniform definition of "leader of character."[66] The current definition simply articulates aspirations. The same is true with the ten ODS outcomes and eight character outcomes. They are aspirational. The Academy must strive to create a realistic picture of what competencies and character attributes must be developed to produce a graduate suitable for commissioning and leader of character.

The existing definitions of "leader of character" in the ODS literature fail to provide the various mission elements with sufficient guidance on how they can develop character or develop the necessary leadership skills to produce Air Force officers and leaders of character. A more refined description of "leader of character" is needed to assist mission elements in designing developmental programs and activities that efficiently and effectively produce the attributes and skills needed by leaders of character. At a minimum, the Academy's definition of "leader of character" must define and describe in behavioral terms the (1) intra-personal attributes, (2) interpersonal qualities, (3) cognitive abilities, (4) communication skills, and (5) task-specific skills necessary to more effectively produce the ten ODS and eight character outcomes.

Lacking consensus on what constitutes character or a "leader of character," mission elements have designed programs and activities that each believes necessary to develop the intra-personal leader qualities and interpersonal skills necessary to produce leaders of character. The unique perspectives on the meaning of character and its relationship to leadership are certainly not unique to the three mission elements at the Academy.

> Character is subterranean and intentionally kept so by those who have low character.
>
> —USMA staff member

There is no universal agreement on what character is or how it is best developed. Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Aristotle, provided us with the foundational understanding of moral character. They focused on the disposition that causes individuals to make choices between right and wrong, as well as the habitual actions that follow. Since then, however, scholars have built their own philosophies about character or suggested their own developmental

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[66] The ODS pamphlet "Building Leaders of Character" (January 2004) states, "Leaders of character demonstrate moral excellence reflected in their values and behavior. They set a personal example for all, whether or not in their units, organizations or society. Leaders of character seek to discover the truth, decide what is right, and then demonstrate the courage to act accordingly—always!"

models. These have not always been congruent. Nevertheless, many of them are reflected in the programs and activities being implemented across mission elements.

We found that Kohlberg's (1981) three-stage model was frequently referred to across mission elements as a source of guidance for the design of developmental programs and activities and provides a consistent model for further design and execution of developmental programs and activities. Kohlberg's developmental model provides useful insights into moral character development. Kohlberg's model's focus on "common good" at the highest level parallels the moral destiny of a leader's journey. Several mission elements used Kohlberg's model in developing programs and activities, and we believe that it holds the most promise as a model around which to synchronize and integrate developmental programs and activities across mission elements.

The most basic level of Kolberg's moral development model, pre-conventional, identifies leadership as concerned about the disposition of rewards and punishment. This pre-conventional level of leadership was at the heart of the Academy's previous training philosophy. ODS, however, reflects the Academy's evolution to the next level of the Kohlberg model, conventional leadership, and sets the foundation for moving cadets toward Kohlberg's final level, the post-conventional level of leadership. Conventional leadership and ODS are concerned about social obligations and adherence to established organizational norms. The skills, knowledge, and abilities that cadets develop in ODS lay the foundation for their lifelong development as leaders of character who can internalize the Air Force's core values.

Improving Integration of Character and Leadership Efforts Across Mission Elements

One of our most significant findings is that USAFA does not have an institutional plan to execute across mission elements the strategic and theoretical frameworks of ODS in an integrated and synchronized manner. The Study Team understands that the Academy will publish its new strategic plan in December 2005. While this clearly will be helpful to mission elements, the new institutional integration office cannot wait until then to begin the process.

Until the Academy's strategic plan is published, we recommend that the Plans and Programs Directorate (XP), through its newly established integration divisions, focus on integrating and synchronizing the five major character and leadership activities now being used across mission elements to produce the ten ODS outcomes more effectively and efficiently. They are (1) modeling, coaching and mentoring; (2) formal leadership training; (3) operational Air Force experiences; (4) formal feedback; and (5) reflective self-evaluation. We identify these activities as the focus of integration efforts because they easily lend themselves to challenge, support, and assessment.

VII. The Officer Development System

These processes also match up with our Individual Development Model which is fundamental to understanding cadet development:[67]

1. Mentoring, modeling and coaching ➔ Coaching and mentoring in the Individual Development Model

2. Formal leadership training ➔Individual readiness to learn

3. Operational Air Force experience ➔Experience

4. Formal feedback ➔Feedback

5. Reflective self-evaluation ➔Reflection

Modeling and Mentoring and Coaching

Each mission element uses some form of modeling, coaching, and/or mentoring to execute its developmental programs and activities. Modeling, coaching, and mentoring are especially relevant to character development.[68] They are critical in exposing cadets to the institution's traditions, heroes, and history in an effort to pass on core values and encourage their emulation.

Modeling

Modeling[69] constitutes a primary component of the socialization process and is integral to ODS. Active modeling gives ongoing reinforcement to the desired values.[70] Standards and expectations for models should be set at the institutional level. The institutional integration office must oversee the use of models to ensure that they are grounded in and familiar with the frameworks of ODS.

Coaching

Coaching is any interaction in which one person helps another do his or her duty, do it better, and meet the individual's goals while achieving the organization's goals. Coaching at the Academy essentially helps cadets learn how to learn by unlocking their potential. Coaches help others see

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[67] Individual development = experience + individual readiness + feedback + reflection + time.

[68] Models, coaches, and mentors focus the development of character and values. They do this primarily through socialization processes. Organizations with distinctive cultures and strongly held beliefs—such as the Air Force, and the Academy in particular—can use this socialization process to instill and internalize core values in cadets.

[69] This includes sponsors, as well as anyone who has contacts with cadets across the Academy or in the community.

[70] It also can be used to reassure cadets that the Academy's espoused values and its values in action are identical, which is critical to ODS. Mentors willing to offer guidance and support and who take an interest in candidates personally, are especially powerful in transmitting values and ideally suited to act as models for cadets.

their own potential by building others' self-awareness and efficacy through support and feedback.[71]

Mentoring

The USAF has a mentoring program and it should be used to full advantage at USAFA. *See* Air Force Policy Directive (AFPD) 36-34. USAF Instruction (AFI) 36-3401 provides guidance on how to carry out Air Force Mentoring. AFI 36-3401 describes a mentor as "a trusted counselor or guide." Mentoring is a relationship in which a person with greater experience and wisdom guides another person to develop both personally and professionally. It is a professional development program designed to help each individual reach his or her maximum potential. Mentoring ranges from informal, spontaneous relationships, based on individuals' common interests and goals, to formal, planned programs initiated and administered by an organization. Our research and benchmarking efforts uncovered empirical evidence that mentoring is a particularly effective form of character and leadership development.[72]

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[71] Nowhere is this more evident than in athletics. Physical education seemingly holds great potential to actively shape character in the course of real events in the here and now. In physical education, moral issues that arise generally involve situations where cadets must demonstrate a level of moral maturity, calling upon participants to balance the needs of one with the needs of the many. Athletic competition can provide an arena for the development of excellent character. How a coach sets up a practice, talks about a game, and responds to discipline problems sets the tone and takes a stand on what sort of character traits are valued. In short, coaches don't simply stamp out character like automobiles in a factory. Coaches provide an opportunity for the practice of virtue. Again, an institutional integration office can ensure that the coaches are intentionally and deliberately developed, helping to import best practices for coaching across mission elements.

[72] A good discussion on mentoring can be found in "The Road to Mentoring: Paved with Good Intentions" Parameters Autumn 2002, pp. 115-127.

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Study Team Assessment: Modeling, coaching, and mentoring have always had a place in cadet development. ODS, however, brings new challenges and responsibilities to the roles of models, coaches, and mentors. They must clearly understand their roles and responsibilities, what will be expected of them, and how they will be evaluated. We see the institutional integration divisions assuming the responsibility to oversee training and education programs developed by mission elements for their models, coaches, and mentors to ensure that they provide cadets with the necessary challenges, support, and assessment vital to the success of ODS. We provide recommendations and an action plan to improve these activities in Annexes 1 and 2.

Formal Leadership Training

> What cadets need is a compass, not a map.

> —paraphrase quote by Carl Weick

All mission elements incorporate some type of formal training into their programs.[73] We recommend that the Research and Assessment Division of the Plans and Programs Directorate assume responsibility to evaluate the relative effectiveness of the design and execution of the various formal training methods across mission elements and provide guidance regarding the best practices and programs.

Study Team Assessment: To improve formal training and education around character and leadership development, we found that USAFA has re-instituted a core academic Leadership Course and developed thorough Professional Military Learning (PML) core curriculum, based on the CEMU. The Center for Character Development conducts Leader of Character seminars for each class, and all cadets must attend them once or twice a year. However, these programs are not coordinated and synchronized across mission elements or evaluated at the institutional level to determine their effectiveness in producing growth in cadets against the ten ODS outcomes.

The Study Team received the greatest number of complaints about the PML programs:

- They overlap and contradict, in some cases, other required courses and programs

- They are taught by volunteer Assistant AOCs who may not have a background in the subject being taught

- They are often presented in a training PowerPoint format, during the hour after lunch when attention is poor

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[73] Our review of the literature and benchmarking efforts across industry indicate that organizations have used formal training programs for decades to develop the conceptual, analytical, and intra- and interpersonal skills associated with character and leadership. Typically, these programs use lectures, case studies, role playing, behavioral role modeling, and simulations to develop the desired skills. For problem solving and interpersonal skills specifically, the most successful training programs typically use simulations of real-world situations. Individuals might also role-play difficult or sensitive interactions, function as members of hypothetical project groups, and contribute as team members in competitive games. Although all these training methods are straightforward and in one way or another captured in programs across mission elements, the Academy still must consider various issues when using them in the ODS construct.

- Cadets do not value this training because it is not graded

- There appears to be little sustainment or reinforcement among mission elements following these sessions

The Academy recognizes these problems and has a Tiger Team working to eliminate the overlap and disconnects among these programs and to improve integration. We provide additional recommendations and action plans to further improve these activities.

Planned Job Assignments and Experiences

Carefully thought-out and appropriately timed cadet job experiences and work events represent another important method used to develop character and leadership skills. Early exposure to tough job challenges, where failure is possible and its consequences are real, is critical for cadet development. So is having broad responsibility for the overall success of an important organizational operation.[74]

Study Team Assessment: This is an area that has seen significant improvement at USAFA. Steps have been taken to ensure that cadets' experiences more closely mirror the roles and responsibilities they will encounter in the operational Air Force. These initiatives are improvements from past programs, but each carries a liability that must be addressed.

Cadet squadrons are operational as well as administrative organizations. The potential exists to increase the opportunities and value of leadership experiences in the Cadet Wing by allowing cadets the freedom for operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent within the boundaries set by the Commandant. The Study Team believes that the Cadet Wing is the appropriate avenue to give cadets greater freedom to make decisions or mistakes that enable them to demonstrate responsibility and suitability for commissioning. Cadets told us that the availability and value of such leadership experiences varies from squadron to squadron.

Squadrons compete for Best Squadron, as in the past, but the Commandant's Challenge and Pinnacle are new events that require the squadrons to perform activities in teams, which is a good thing. However, the risk is that emphasis on team and group results may overshadow individual development.

The cadet discipline system (demerits) has been replaced by the Air Force (UCMJ) discipline system to mirror the operational Air Force. Cadets in leadership roles carry out the administrative portion of discipline just as they would in operational squadrons. The disciplinary tools available in the UCMJ system are not always appropriate for Academy-specific infractions. As a result, cadets are confused about the appropriate use of Letters of Counseling, Admonition, and Reprimand for training environment infractions for which there is no operational Air Force corollary.

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[74] Empirical evidence suggests that this method is particularly useful for developing an individual's interpersonal skills (such as teambuilding and persuasion) and conceptual skills (such as strategic thinking).

VII. The Officer Development System

This summer, the three upper classes will have intern-like experiences in the operational Air Force, whereas in the past, cadets had only one summer experience. The quality of these experiences will be a function of how well these experiences are structured for development. This program has had mixed results in the past.

Formal Feedback & Assessment

> The best 2nd Lt is not going to be the one that got 100% on every test—it is going to be the one who struggled through finding out who they are and how they can better themselves.
>
> —USAFA faculty member

Focused and relevant feedback must be a more robust component of ODS, as it is in the "pre-brief, fly, debrief" operational Air Force process. Accurate feedback both motivates a cadet's desire for change and points the cadet in the appropriate direction for additional development.[75] Feedback may take the form of one-on-one coaching, multi-rater 360-degree assessments (involving subordinates, peers, faculty, and staff), or even one-day or longer feedback-intensive programs that are classroom based.

Those responsible to provide feedback will require additional time, training, and practice in this skill. Also, time must be specifically allocated for feedback sessions. Training is important because if the feedback itself is confusing or contradictory, then development is not likely to occur.

Study Team Assessment: This is an area that needs improvement. The Cadet Performance Appraisal system and evaluation forms have not been changed to keep up with the ODS framework. Consequently, staff, faculty, and cadets receive little or no feedback on their progress against the ten ODS outcomes. Staff, faculty, and cadets are so busy, feedback (which takes time) either does not occur or is inconsistent. We offer recommendations, and our action plan to address these shortcomings.

Reflective Self-Evaluation

ODS must consist of more than simply exposing cadets to a desired set of values or pushing them through a set of challenging, stretching experiences to develop character and leadership. Character and leadership development requires that individuals have time for self-reflection, that they set aside specific periods for analyzing and understanding the basis of their own particular

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[75] By feedback, we mean comment on
- The person's strong and weak job performance areas
- A desired set of character and leadership competencies
- The cadet's current knowledge, skills, and abilities based on character and leadership expectations
- What progress cadets are making

character and/or leadership successes and failures. The same is true of hardships such as failures and mistakes. Development occurs only as the result of reflection and learning.[76]

Study Team Assessment: This is the area in greatest need of improvement. Time is necessary for feedback and reflective self-evaluation, though time alone will not result in constructive reflection. Structured activities across mission elements must be designed to facilitate accurate feedback and reflective self-evaluation. Our recommendations and action plan provide details to improve these activities.

A specific list of findings, discussions, and recommendations resulting from our study of ODS are detailed below. Again, recommendations are brief. Recommendations are more fully discussed in the Action Plan attached as Annex 2.

ODS Findings, Discussions and Recommendations

Finding: External environmental demands placed on USAFA by the media, Congress, and graduates, combined with the significant efforts required for internal transformational change at USAFA, creates the need for a Provost or Deputy Superintendent at USAFA. (Note: This Finding is also found in the Strategic section, S12.)

Discussion: A Provost can focus on coordinating and integrating the internal matters at USAFA while the Superintendent focuses primarily on the external environment. A complete discussion can be found preceding Recommendation S12 in the Strategic section.

Recommendation O1: *Establish and fill the position of a Provost or Deputy Superintendent, as a two-star equivalent position, to ensure integration of ODS across the mission elements.* This person needs to have a strong academic, operational, and, if possible, athletics background with proven abilities to build consensus among disparate groups. The term of service should be a minimum of five years to provide continuity of oversight during the transformation period.

Finding: USAFA recently created and is in the process of staffing, an institutional integration office.[77] Lack of an integration office has been an obstacle to synchronization and integration of character and leadership activities across mission elements.

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[76] The need for this reflective self-evaluation is probably most evident when considering intra-personal development. Value internalization (regardless of the value's content) virtually always demands that the person take time to think about and examine the personal implications of that value before endorsing and committing to it. The need for reflective self-evaluation is also evident when learning from multi-rater and other types of feedback. Implicit in all feedback techniques is the assumption that individuals will have the time and make the effort to interpret and carefully reflect on the complex information contained in the feedback. Similarly, some less common developmental processes, such as outdoor military exercises and wilderness experiences and intensive athletic competitions, have value only to the extent that the cadets see and reflect on the broader personal ramifications captured by the experiences. Although self-reflection is clearly not a social influence process, it appears to facilitate the development of leadership skill by helping individuals better understand themselves and their potential impact on others.

Discussion: The integration efforts at USAFA after the initial implementation of ODS were handled by Lt Col Lori Salgado and Maj Russ MacLean. They were assigned to the Plans Office but did not have clear lines of authority, nor were they acknowledged as having the Superintendent's authority when acting in the capacity of ODS integrators. We believe that previous institutional change efforts at the Academy failed because those responsible for integrating change effort were often junior officers.

With the new organizational effort, both XPL and XPC Division chiefs will report to the XP Plans and Programs Directorate Colonel, who in turn reports to the Director of Staff, who in turn reports to the Superintendent. This ponderous line of authority raises concern about the ability of these divisions to speak with the authority of the Superintendent in executing their responsibilities. This could be somewhat mitigated by the excellent working relationship among the senior mission element leaders.

Our most recent interviews indicate that the integration office will have Initial Operating Capability (IOC) in July but may not be fully staffed until much later. The integration office is vital to the operational integration efforts at a critical time in the organizational change process and must be staffed as soon as possible. To leadership's credit, the Research and Assessments Division, which moved to the Plans Directorate, is almost fully staffed.

Recommendation O2: *The newly created integration divisions in XP (XPL, "Leadership Development Division," and XPC, "Culture and Climate Division") must be properly resourced and given the authority to effectively integrate ODS across the Academy.*

Finding: USAFA does not have a program to routinely assess how the character and leadership abilities of its graduates are being perceived by operational units to which they are assigned.

Discussion: One of the most important methods of assessing organizational effectiveness is to evaluate customer satisfaction. The customers of USAFA are Air Force operational units. Two common methods of assessing customer satisfaction are surveys and interviews with customers. USAFA does not have a consistent method of determining customer satisfaction. Neither the gaining units in the field nor the cadets commissioned by the institution are surveyed or interviewed. Over the past ten years, USAFA has surveyed the field on only one or two occasions. By contrast, AFOATS surveys the field every year to determine satisfaction of units gaining its ROTC graduates. Other Service academies conduct such surveys every year and have longitudinal data to track trends and to support and direct institutional change.

USAFA must partner with USAF to conduct these surveys and interviews annually or conduct them on its own. USAFA recently sent a survey to assess the quality of its graduates as perceived by gaining units. These efforts must be sustained annually. A detailed recommendation can be found in the Action Plan, Annex 2.

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[77] During the course of this Study, the USAFA Programs and Plans Directorate (XP) added two new integration divisions. In January, the Directorate's organization and staffing were approved. After considering courses of

Recommendation O3: *Partner with USAF to conduct surveys and interviews annually to assess whether or not graduates have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their roles as junior Air Force Officers.*

Finding: USAFA has not synchronized and integrated its character and leadership programs across mission elements.

Discussion: The rapid implementation of ODS did not allow the Academy sufficient time to develop a plan to execute, synchronize, and integrate character and leadership developmental programs across mission elements. As a result, mission elements were left to execute strategic concepts with little tactical guidance. The results of implementation efforts are uneven. While there are many good initiatives, there are some noticeable problems. Most significantly, PML programs were primarily designed by the Training Wing without input from other mission elements. Consequently, those programs overlap, repeat, and sometimes contradict content provided in programs offered through other mission elements.

Likewise, the Commandant's Challenge was planned largely within the Training Wing, without significant input from the Athletic Department or the Academic Department. Our investigation suggested that while the Commandant's Challenge was a success, it could have been even more successful had there been deliberate and intentional cooperation across mission elements.

The Academy has recognized some of these problems and has stood up a Tiger Team to synchronize and integrate PML lessons with programs provided by other mission elements. Our preferred approach is to have a mosaic of integrated experiences "born joint" through cooperation among mission elements rather than joined after being developed.

Recommendation O4: *Complete the current comprehensive review being undertaken by the mission elements to deconflict programs and activities and to identify gaps, duplications, and "no value added" programs and activities and eliminate them. Develop an integrated and coordinated 47-month character and leadership development program to produce the ten ODS outcomes across the six dimensions of cadet development.*

Finding: Organizational structure makes the dialogue across mission elements very difficult.

Discussion: The Academy's organizational structure lends itself to mission elements' becoming stove-piped. Academic, athletic, military, and character development programs are individually managed, without an eye toward mutual objectives. While mission elements have consistent gatherings and meetings to share information within the element, it is rare for this to occur between or across mission elements. This has been an obstacle to healthy and meaningful cross-mission element dialogue necessary for the effective implementation of ODS.

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action, it was decided to establish two divisions within the XP Directorate: XPL-Leadership Development Division and XPC- the Culture and Climate Division.

Recommendation O5: *Create new or expand existing forums among mission elements to facilitate cross-talk. Provide forums for grassroots up-flow of information in addition to top-down.*

Finding: Faculty need to be composed of the right individuals to sustain ODS.

Discussion: Much is being done at the Academy to ensure that the right individuals are serving as staff, faculty, and coaches. The Superintendent has established policies limiting extended-duty tours at USAFA and is requiring periodic operational experience for permanent faculty. The challenge is to institutionalize the rotation of highly skilled, dedicated officers with recent operational experience to serve as role models, coaches, and mentors.

Recommendation O6: *Develop a marketing program that advertises service at USAFA as an instructor or tactical staff as an important, value-adding assignment that is career enhancing. This would mean ensuring that the rotating faculty and staff are viewed and valued as a "second graduating class" that is more valuable to the operational Air Force than when they came to the Academy.*

Recommendation O7: *Review and assess the process of faculty selection, retention, and evaluation to ensure that USAF and USAFA provide the best possible role models for cadets. Rotating faculty should have current USAF operational experience, and tenured, permanent faculty should be involved in significant outreach activities and/or ongoing interaction with the operational Air Force. The Superintendent should facilitate these efforts.*

Finding: A number of staff and faculty we spoke with indicated their belief that ODS is primarily for cadets. Many of those we interviewed did not see their role in ODS as broader than their responsibility within their particular mission element.

Discussion: ODS is for everyone at USAFA. Developing leaders of character is the number-one job at the Academy. Mission element competition and rivalry linger, although clear progress has been made to close that gap. Still, we found the tendency for staff and faculty to view ODS from the perspective of their particular mission element and not from an institutional perspective.

West Point and the Army found that their officers had lost focus on the concepts of officership (Leader of Character, Servant of the Nation, Warrior, and Member of a Profession). To promote selfless service and "giving back to the organization or institution," the definition of leadership was modified to extend beyond their personal development. ODS is widely viewed as "for cadets" rather than "for all," and therefore modifying the definition of leadership will assist this change of focus.

Recommendation O8: *The definition of leadership as articulated by USAFA and the Air Force must be expanded to include the requirement that leaders be responsible for "improving organizations" and "developing subordinates."*

Finding: There is no mechanism or structure to integrate character and leadership development curriculum across mission elements or to determine whether or not the curriculum balance between science/engineering and the liberal arts is best suited to develop leaders of character.

Discussion: Character and leadership are significant components of the ODS framework, as well as of the commissioning suitability construct we discuss in the next section. All activities at the USAFA—academic, military, and athletic—share in the development of leaders of character. The Center for Character Development, under the Commandant, provides formal training seminars (LIFT, VECTOR, etc.) for each class, as well as the execution of the honor education and respect programs. The Dean of the Faculty supervises the Leadership, Ethics, and Philosophy Departments with significant core and elective courses addressing character and leadership-related issues. The Cadet Training Wing, under the Commandant, oversees the PML lessons and the performance appraisal and peer evaluation process for cadets.

The Academy chartered a study[78] to look at the integration of character and leadership education across the curriculum. That study provides significant guidance for improvement of the Academy's character and leadership development programs. There are, we are sure, *many opportunities* for character and leadership development beyond content of the academic curriculum. These opportunities need to be identified and become embedded means to assess character development.

Recommendation O9: *Articulate the key dimensions of character consistent with the ten ODS outcomes and eight character outcomes, describe them, and determine the observable behaviors associated with each dimension.*

Recommendation O10: *Continue to review and assess the effectiveness of the USAFA character development programs—VECTOR, LIFT, R&R, and ACES—to ensure that content and design align with the PITO framework. Ensure that these programs are progressive. Synchronize and integrate follow-on activities across programs to leverage the effectiveness of these programs.*

Finding: There is widespread discontent with the honor system, but widespread support for the Honor *code*.

> The disincentive to not violate honor is to be shunned by your peers. If being rejected by the team is not important, you don't want that person in your organization.
>
> —Air University senior faculty member

Discussion: The honor system is perceived as too legalistic, involving lawyers, due process, and standards of evidence. The honor system hardly resembles what we understand to have been the original intent of the program. Based on our interviews of faculty, staff, and cadets, we conclude

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[78] "Assessment and Recommendations Concerning Character Development at the United States Air Force Academy: Report to the Superintendent," 20 January 2005, Michael Josephson, Josephson Institute of Ethics.

that it is not working. Honor underlies character and is at the center of what makes USAFA special. The process needs to be reformed.

Out Study Team was specifically asked not to explore the Honor System and Code, as there were other studies being done in this area. We report it merely because it was such a prevalent concern during our interviews and focus groups. Several individuals told us they thought that "fixing the honor system" was a necessary prerequisite to developing leaders of character.

Recommendation O11: *Restore confidence in the honor system*. (See the Josephson Institute Study for specific recommendations.)

Finding: Heavy weighting of academics—the Order of Merit List (OML) at USAFA is 70% academic performance—leads to a perception that military and physical performance are not significant components of the cadet developmental experience. This perception negates the importance of those programs, as well as any character and leadership activities that are embedded in those programs.

Discussion: There is a pervasive attitude that academics is the primary area that can get a cadet dismissed from USAFA. The importance of academics to the overall standing of cadets predictably causes cadets to focus primarily on academics. Consequently, cadets do not spend much (if any) time on military subjects taught during Commandant's Hour lessons, because they are not graded and military programs do not figure prominently into the OML.

Cadets spend time on those areas of behavior and performance for which they are held accountable. In fairness, a portion of the 70% academic weight comes directly from classes that touch on character, leadership, ethics, management, and the like, but cadets do not necessarily see it that way. All other commissioning sources (ROTC and OTS) place less weight on academics in figuring overall GPA and Order of Merit than does USAFA.

The following is a comparison of these weightings:

1. USMA: the OML weighting is 55% AP, 30% MP, and 15% PP
2. USNA: the OML weighting is 65% AP, 35% MP/PP
3. ROTC: the OML is 50% AP, 50% MP/PP
4. OTS: the OML is 100% MP/PP

Cadets do not see the Academy as an institution for character and leadership development, but primarily as an academic institution, where success or failure is directly a function of academic performance. Consequently, commissioning suitability has not been linked clearly to character and leadership performance.

Recommendation O12: *Change the cadet OML to better balance emphasis among the developmental dimensions by decreasing the emphasis on academics and increasing the emphasis on an accountability for character development.*

> We are an Air Force base that happens to have an Academy on it; not an
> Academy that happens to be located on an Air Force Base."

—Lt Gen John Rosa, Superintendent, USAFA

Finding: Institutional assessment efforts do not adequately assess the effectiveness of mission element programs in developing leaders of character or the progress of cadets against the ten ODS outcomes.

Discussion: One of the critical factors to institutionalizing change is to measure organizational, cultural, and developmental change across the institution. The Institutional Assessments office must continue playing a vital role in providing Academy leadership with a means to measure the effectiveness of these major change efforts.

Recommendation O13: *Direct the construction of a robust assessment process focused on how mission elements are adapting to ODS and to what extent programs and activities across mission elements are facilitating organization and cultural change, as well as developing cadets as measured against the ten ODS outcomes.*

Finding: Faculty, staff, and cadets, in general, are not well informed on what it means to be a leader of character and what their responsibilities are in the character and leadership development process.

Discussion: Cadets do not really understand ODS as a character and leadership development framework, even though they know that ODS exists.

For cadets to take ownership of their own development within the ODS construct, ODS education and training need to be brought to a practical level. ODS connections should be made explicit in all programs and activities at USAFA. For example, ODS connections should be made in course syllabi so that cadets understand how ODS is woven into the academic curriculum. Additionally, ODS should be operationalized at the level of the cadet, and a specific "cadet version" of ODS should be written for cadets to provide specific guidance for cadets to assume their roles and responsibilities under ODS.

Likewise, staff and faculty should be provided with additional education and support on ODS to ensure that they are qualified to design, teach, and assess character education and leadership programs and activities. Staff and faculty particularly need in-service training on modeling, coaching, and mentoring if they are to assume those roles in carrying out the responsibilities to counsel, provide feedback, facilitate reflection, and assess the cadet's character and leadership development.

Recommendation: O14: *Design and publish an ODS informational pamphlet that specifically addresses the roles and responsibilities of cadets in the character and leadership development process.*

Recommendation O15: *Institute an ODS educational process as part of the summer staff and faculty development and transition program with experienced or senior faculty as teachers and mentors to incoming staff and faculty.* Education should include specific examples of how ODS is or can be incorporated into curriculum design and classroom teaching methods.

Recommendation: O16: *Clearly state and sustain the importance of staff and faculty in the character development process at USAFA.* Periodically provide staff and faculty with in-service programs, particularly at the beginning of each academic year. Develop curriculum around the theories that form the foundation for character and leadership education and development. These programs should focus on both theory and practical application.

Recommendation O17: *Recommend that all personnel be evaluated on their understanding and implementation of ODS.* Assess staff and faculty on their evaluation reports and in their quarterly counseling against one or more criteria related to their understanding and implementation of ODS principles.

> Isn't it interesting that faculty performance appraisals are not tied to the performance of their students, but we tend to do that for the Tacs.
>
> —USMA senior officer

Finding: AOCs do not perceive themselves as having sufficient time to engage in the activities directed at cadet development.

Discussion: AOCs report fairly consistently that they spend about 20 to 30 percent of their time with cadets, when they believe they should be spending 70 to 80 percent. To be more effective as developers of their cadets, AOCs need to have their cadet contact time protected by the institution.

The main priority in an AOC's day seems to be administrative, not focused directly on cadet development. AOCs spend much time either answering emails or in meetings. They spend a relatively small amount of their time in direct contact with developing cadets. The Academy is assigning a second AMT to each squadron with the intention of freeing up AOCs so that they can have more contact with cadets. It is not clear how this will affect AOCs' time to directly develop cadets.

Because this is the first squadron command for many AOCs, they are simultaneously adjusting to the roles of squadron commander and AOC. There is also evidence that two years may not be enough time for the actual assignment as AOC. These AOCs may get reassigned to a staff role in as little as one year. This may not be the best return on investment, given the education and training that the AOCs receive.

Recommendation O18: *Study how the AOCs and AMTs use their time. Identify what interferes with their primary roles of developing leaders of character. Eliminate time-wasters and protect their time so that they can interact with and develop cadets.*

Recommendation O19: *The AOCs and AMTs must be the primary instructors for the PML.* These hours are precious opportunities for AOCs and AMTs to model, coach, and mentor. These responsibilities should not be delegated to Assistant AOCs, without close coordination.

Finding: There are extensive processes in place to objectively assess intellectual, physical, and professional performance. There are no objective measures available to assess the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of cadet development.

Discussion: The spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions are the key components of character, but there are no metrics or objective criteria to assess cadet development in these areas. As a result, character is not explicitly addressed in determining commissioning suitability, or character is combined in a very subjective Military Performance Average (MPA) assessment. This lack of objectivity results in arbitrary standards. Without specific descriptions or criteria for assessment, the character dimensions rarely appear as performance objectives or on performance appraisals. They are not a source of developmental feedback and reflection among cadets or between staff and faculty and cadets. Because character is a core factor of ODS and essential for determining commissioning suitability, the character dimensions must be better described and defined.

Recommendation O20: *Establish assessment criteria to evaluate cadet character development over time.*

Recommendation O21: *Design specific programs to develop the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of a cadet's life as part of ODS.*

Finding: AOCs perceive themselves as not receiving expected incentives for duty at USAFA.

Discussion: Perceptions are everything. Whether or not AOCs perceive that they are getting what they were promised is an internal matter. However, if there is a perception that AOC service is not valued or rewarded as expected, it will affect the recruiting of future AOCs. These perceptions center on promotions, receiving credit for command, and receiving credit for PME schooling, all of which are controlled by AETC.

Recommendation O22: *USAFA must partner with AETC on incentives for AOCs to ensure that expectations clearly are understood and met.*

Finding: There are fundamental differences between being an AOC in a developmental cadet squadron versus an operational squadron. We found that AOCs did not understand these differences when they were recruited and assigned as AOCs.

Discussion: AOCs possess a very different set of responsibilities, roles, and authority than operational Air Force squadron commanders. From the time that an AOC is recruited to the final evaluation at the end of the tour, USAFA needs to make clear the differences between these roles. *In the operational Air Force, the squadron performance and mission accomplishment is the focus, and individual development is secondary. At USAFA, the opposite is true. Individual development is the mission and focus, while squadron performance is secondary.*

Squadron AOCs are held responsible for a majority of a cadet's personal and professional development while time holding an official command position. This is an important distinction to understand, because the development of cadets is impacted by how the AOC balances their roles as commander and developer.[79] If the AOC is acting primarily as a commander, then the cadets' developmental opportunities are reduced. If the AOC is acting primarily as a developer, then the cadets' developmental opportunities are increased. Certainly the latter is the desired state. However, we often heard that cadets avoid their AOCs and tend not to be candid with the AOC because AOCs are seen as the punishing authority figure rather than the coach and developer of cadets.

In their command role, AOCs lack the tools that operational commanders hold to administer rewards and punishments. For example:

- AOCs do not possess the authority to administer Article 15 punishment

- AOCs do not have the authority to separate a cadet due to lack of performance or potential

- AOCs do not have authority to grant passes and leave without the approval of the Scheduling Board

It is important to align the AOCs' performance appraisal objectives with these roles. AOCs will focus on what is measured. If the AOC is being measured against criteria that are about commanding and unit performance more than developing individual cadets, then the AOC will perform as a commander more than a developer.

Recommendation O23: *Communicate clearly in the recruiting and assessment processes the tension between the AOC roles as commander and developer.*

- Communicate clearly to AOCs, during the recruiting, education, and training processes, the balance between their responsibilities as commander and developer

- Ensure that AOCs are held responsible primarily for cadet development, not primarily for squadron performance, in the performance appraisal process

Finding: The AOC is supposed to be responsible for assigning a cadet's MPA, but in practice it is a shared responsibility.

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[79] This consideration and discussion around the role of commander and developer is central to defining the roles and responsibilities of the AOC. Commanders command their units and are focused, in the main, on performance and complete mission success. This often means that the commander directs: telling others not only what must be done, but how to do what must be done. Risk and the potential for failure are minimized to the greatest degree possible. On the other hand, developers do not primarily focus on performance, but on the process that leads to the performance. They focus on describing what must be done, but not on how to do it. This decision is given to the cadets, so that they are able to practice leadership and development. Giving decision-making responsibility to the cadets will require the AOC to take risks and allow the possibility of failure. If the AOCs are evaluated on the successful performance of missions, vice the development of the cadets, then they will command, and development will be relegated to ground in the AOC-cadet relationship, the exact reverse of what ODS requires.

Discussion: The AOC's duty position description indicates that the AOC has the primary responsibility for cadet leadership development and integrating developmental experiences. While the AOC is primarily responsible for a cadet's professional development, the AOC does not have sole responsibility for assigning the MPA grade. A portion of the MPA grade is "fenced" to allow for input from the academic department and coaches for selected intercollegiate athletes. However, there are no standards to assess a cadet in leadership or character. This is more true in the Academic Department than with the Athletic Department.

Furthermore, requiring forced distribution for the MPA does not take into consideration individual development. Forced distribution is a tool for selection, not development. Using forced distribution undermines the accuracy and credibility of the MPA grade.

Recommendation O24: *AOCs are the sole MPA grade assigner.* In assigning the grade, AOCs should consider inputs from faculty, coaches, cadets (360-degree), sponsors, and supervisors of extracurricular activities. End the fixed percentage for intercollegiate athletes and faculty.

- The Dean, in coordination with the Commandant, should determine how the faculty can provide useful input to the AOC on character and leadership development, based on observed behavior

- The Athletic Director, in coordination with the Commandant, should determine how coaches and instructors can provide useful input to the AOC on character and leadership development, based on observed behavior

Finding: The Master's Degree in Counseling at the University of Colorado is an excellent educational experience for officers in preparation for their roles as AOCs. More can be done, however, in the program to prepare the officers for the AOC role.

Discussion: AOCs report three shortcomings to the UCCS educational experience:

- There is a lack of organizational leadership courses. AOCs expressed concern that there were no theoretical or applied leadership courses, yet AOCs perceive their primary duty to be leading a complex organization.[80] Given the fact that they are going to face the multifaceted and competing aspects of organizational leadership, it seems appropriate to provide them with the theoretical and applied foundations of leadership in organizations.

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[80] The AOC education program is designed after USMA's Tactical Officer Education Program. The Military Academy's program is now in its 14th year, and this program is making the transition in the summer of 2005 to a program in Organizational Behavior/Leadership at Columbia University. The program will shift from a program primarily focused on counseling to one focused on leadership. The AOC education program must include some significant coursework in organizational leadership, organizational change, organizational culture, and educational psychology, as well as curriculum design, execution, and assessment. These competencies are critical for enabling the AOCs to be effective in executing ODS. If UCCS cannot provide these courses, then the USAFA faculty must. This might include USAFA faculty becoming adjuncts at UCCS in order to provide the necessary coursework that closes this critical educational gap.

- There is no course in abnormal psychology. AOCs reported a desire to have more exposure to such a course because it would help them to detect potentially serious psychological issues in their cadets.

- AOCs expressed a desire to make their coursework come alive by directly grounding it in the USAFA experience. AOCs would like their fieldwork to be more directly related to the roles and responsibilities they will assume as an AOC.[81]

Recommendation O25: *Shift the AOC educational program from a counseling focus to a leadership and leader development focus with some counseling. Assignments for those courses should be grounded in the Cadet Wing.*

Recommendation O26: *The UCCS program must be aggressively bridged to USAFA throughout a student AOC's entire year.*

Finding: The chain of command can better set the conditions that allow cadets operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent within the boundaries set by the Commandant. A perceived fear of failure diminishes the latitude given to AOCs and cadets to benefit from developmental activities.

Discussion: AOCs feel they are assessed against their squadron's performance and that squadron performance is given more importance than individual development. Consequently, AOCs tend to *command* their squadrons at the expense of allowing cadets to make mistakes expected of developing young leaders. On the part of both the AOCs and the cadets, this results in a loss of developmental opportunities and the feeling of being over-controlled. In the absence of any explicit encouragement from the chain of command, AOCs will not have the confidence to allow their cadets the full extent of potential learning experiences. AOCs seem to be too limited inside existing boundaries to truly allow cadets full developmental opportunities.

Recommendation O27: *Allow the cadet chain of command operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent to accomplish missions within the boundaries or standards of acceptability set by the Commandant.* The Training Wing and AOCs must coach and mentor cadets in leadership roles. Ensure that AOCs have the latitude to underwrite the efforts of their developing cadets. We recommend that the chain of command

- Expand AOC and cadet latitude for decision making.

- Allow AOCs to administer discipline to cadets who make mistakes. Do *not* take discipline out of the hands of the AOCs, except for rare instances where jurisdiction is withheld at Group or Training Wing level.

- Allow AOCs the authority to use individual rewards and punishments to augment the Outstanding Squadron System to shape their squadron climate—no quotas.

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[81] Academy leadership needs to guard against having the AOC students' experience become simply on-the-job training. Keep in mind that there is a tension between their independent academic experience at UCCS and being co-opted into prematurely assuming responsibilities as an AOC.

Finding: The discipline system at USAFA, while having many positive effects, also has some liabilities that may be working against the ten desired ODS outcomes.

Discussion: USAFA replaced its cadet demerit and tours system with the Air Force (UCMJ) discipline system. The intent was to mirror the operational Air Force and get the cadets used to using the forms, processes, and procedures they will have to use with their airmen when they are lieutenants. On one hand, this has had the positive effect of requiring cadets to confront each other and have face-to-face discussions, whereas in the past, a demerit slip just showed up in a cadet's room awarding demerits for an infraction. Abandoning fixed punishments for specific infractions requires the cadets to consider alternative ways to motivate and discipline their classmates and subordinates. This is consistent with transformational leadership.

On the other hand, the Air Force discipline system, which uses LOC, LOA, and LORs, may not always be appropriate in USAFA's training environment. The Academy has many Academy-peculiar requirements that do not have an analog in the operational Air Force. Using LOC, LOA, and LORs for these infractions would be inappropriate in the operational Air Force. Therefore, the Academy is reinforcing the inappropriate use of these disciplinary tools. Furthermore, this disciplinary system is very time consuming. Time-pressed cadets will often overlook corrections and punishments that need to be made for minor offenses because of the time it takes to administer administrative punishment. Neglecting to hold cadets accountable for USAFA standards fuels the arbitrariness of punishments that lead to ambiguity in the minds of the cadets and results in cynicism. Therefore, the Academy needs to augment the UCMJ disciplinary system with alternatives to address Academy-peculiar offenses.

Recommendation O28: *Modify the cadet discipline system.*

Finding: Not all cadets are assessed in their development in leadership positions.

Discussion: Many cadets believe that the only way to learn leadership is be in an actual leadership position. They do not recognize that leadership can be learned without being the focal leader. Leaders can learn just as much about leadership by being a good follower, for example, as they can being the actual leader. Additionally, there is no requirement that every cadet have a leadership position in the wing prior to graduation. Cadets do not feel that they are not getting opportunities to develop as leaders. The Commandant is working this issue, and also including measures of success in the leadership positions.

Additionally, it is not apparent that AOCs are matching positions, duties, and responsibilities to the developmental needs of the cadets. Cadets perceive that their only leadership development occurs in chain-of-command positions. There are other roles and positions of responsibility that can also be used to develop leadership: presidents of clubs, coaches of intramural teams, etc. Cadets do not receive feedback on their performance in those roles and positions that is tied to their development as leaders of character. Our review of the forms and processes associated with performance feedback suggests this.

Recommendation O29: *Align Cadet Wing roles and responsibilities with the PITO framework and Leadership Growth Model.*

Recommendation O30: *Every cadet must be evaluated in a meaningful leadership role in sophomore, junior, and senior years, distributed across mission elements. Establish performance measures to assess development in all roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

Finding: The ten ODS outcomes are not being used as measures of success for cadets.

Discussion: Cadets are not being evaluated across mission elements by standards related to the ten ODS outcomes. AOCs are using different criteria to rank-order their cadets, as are the cadets themselves in their peer ratings of one another. The cadet performance appraisal form has not been updated to reflect or include the ten ODS outcomes. Those outcomes need to be the integrating framework for all leader development behavior and should be the established measures of success.

Further, the cadet peer evaluation process does not permit underclass cadets to comment on the leadership and character development of more senior cadets. We feel that this is a loss not only to the institution, but also the cadets. This is one area of self-awareness that can be assessed and conveyed only by the subordinate. It is unclear how leaders can gauge their leadership effectiveness without getting input and insights from those they lead.

Recommendation O31: *Alter the forms by which cadets are assessed and evaluated to reflect the desired outcomes of the ODS and provide positive and meaningful feedback to cadets in terms of those measurable outcomes.*

Recommendation O32: *Use 360° feedback as part of the cadets' performance appraisal system. Allow subordinates to comment on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their cadet leaders. Tailor feedback using the ten ODS outcomes to support the ratings.*

Peer comments (at the Academy) need to be strengthened. An honest answer to '"Will you follow Cadet _____ into combat?". Increase the self-awareness of cadets … they don't get enough doses of reality of what others think about them. 360 evaluations increase self-awareness and leverage peer input and peer pressure.

—Air Force Major in ACSC

Finding: There are inadequate developmental tools that allow cadets to take ownership of their own character and leadership development.

Discussion: The Individual Development Model requires readiness to learn, experiences, feedback, reflection, and time. Cadets are very busy and go through a lot of experiences, but we found that they often do not have a purposeful way to structure their experiences, much less time to think and reflect. As a general rule, our conversations with many cadets revealed that few of them have developed goals (other than academic); their definition of success is to survive the system and making it to graduation. They appear to be passive spectators of their developmental

journey, rather than owners of it. We also found this to be the case in terms of time management and setting priorities. Cadets need to take active responsibility for their own development with accountability both to themselves and the institution for their development.

We recommend below that each cadet have a Professional Development Portfolio. The specifics are located in the action plan, but the two key pieces of such a portfolio are the Individual Leader Development Plan (ILDP) and the Individual Reflective Journal. The intent of this program is to systematically provide the means for cadets to shape their own journey, reflect on how they are doing and what they are learning, and improve. This all needs to be done with the careful coaching of the AOC and upper-class cadets. Adopting such a process will have the effect of improving cadet self-awareness and is a key component in accomplishing the ten ODS outcomes. As an additional benefit, this program will help the institution in its responsibility to determine commissioning suitability.

It is not clear that cadets are given sufficient time to reflect on their development, particularly when they have leadership positions. It is the reflective practice that is important for making sense out of cadet leadership experiences and turning the experiences into executable learning. Additionally, integrated reflective activities and process are not evident within and across programs at USAFA. AFDD 1-1 Force Development, the Air Force's leadership doctrine, emphasizes the importance of developing self-aware and adaptive leaders, and the reflective practice is essential to this development. The lack of sufficient reflective practice is not consistent with USAF doctrinal requirements. Finally, the academic accreditation report of 1999 addresses the need for time for the reflective practice.

Recommendation O33: *Implement a program requiring cadets to build ILDPs.*

Recommendation O34: *Develop a portfolio and journaling requirement for cadets to reflect on and make meaning of significant experiences during their four years at the Academy.*

VIII. Commissioning Suitability[82]
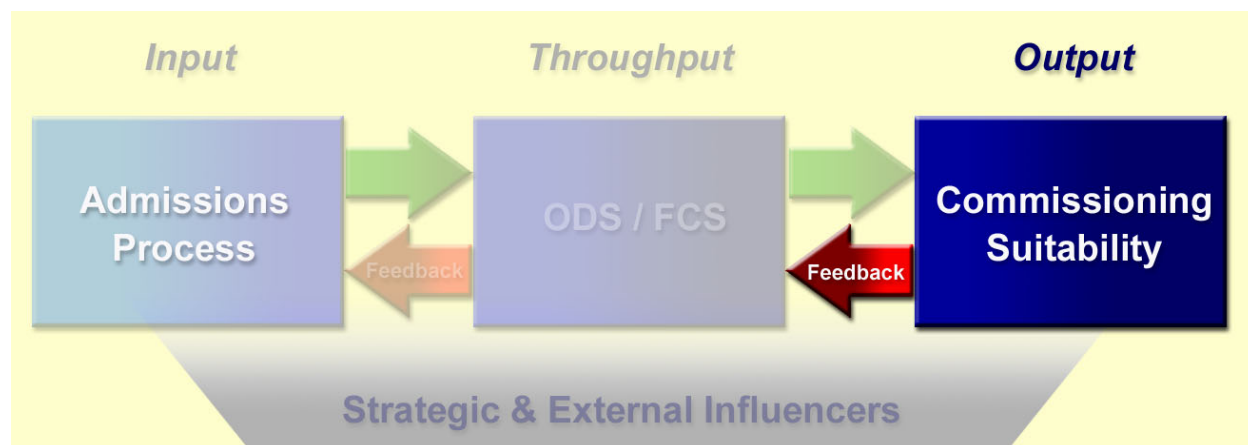
Introduction

We begin this section with a detailed discussion of the concept of commissioning suitability as it applies to cadets at USAFA, ROTC, and OTS. In our discussion we review the status of commissioning suitability across accession sources and the conceptual issues that serve as the foundation for what it means to be suitable for commissioning. Because our primary focus is USAFA, we start with the initiatives taken by the former Commandant of Cadets at the Academy, Gen Patrick Gamble[83] in the early 1990s. We then discuss how the Academy is executing effective leader- and character-development programs to produce officers and leaders of character.

We include in this section our observations and findings about commissioning suitability based on our interviews, focus group discussions, research, and benchmarking outside the Air Force and the Academy. Finally, we provide specific, executable recommendations to define commissioning suitability, establish standards necessary to determine suitability, and describe a review process that we believe will provide the best candidates for commissioning in the USAF regardless of accession source.

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[82] This document represents the output of the Organizational Design Model of input (admissions) to throughput (ODS) to output (leaders of character suitable for commissioning in the USAF).

[83] Gen Patrick Gamble was the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces, Hickam AFB, Hawaii, before his retirement on 1 May 2001. Gen Gamble entered the USAF in 1967 through the four-year Reserve Officer Training Program at Texas A & M University. He flew more than 394 combat missions as a forward air controller in the O-1 Bird Dog in Vietnam. He commanded a fighter squadron and three wings. Before becoming Commander of the Pacific Air Forces, he was the deputy chief of staff for Air and Space operations, HQ/AF, the Pentagon. Other assignments include Executive Officer to the USAF Chief of Staff; Commandant of Cadets; and Commander, 34th Training Wing at the USAFA. Gen Gamble was Distinguished Graduate of the Air War College and earned a Master of Business Administration and Management degree from Auburn University. His decorations include 13 Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the Defense Distinguished Service Medal.

What We Were Asked to Do

With respect to commissioning suitability we were asked to:

- Review and assess USAFA's current method of determining commissioning suitability; and

- Develop and recommend the most beneficial approach or processes and the timeframes for determining commissioning suitability based on assessments of character, aptitude, and suitability for military life.

- Determine objective indicators for determining commissioning suitability

Methodology

Our in-depth examination of Commissioning Suitability allowed us to get a comprehensive view of the Academy's character and leadership development processes and how those processes compare to similar processes across business, industry, and academia.

The Study Team spent nearly eight months,[84] interviewing personnel with primary roles in the conception and design of Commissioning Suitability, as well as those who have been responsible for its execution and have experienced it. During our investigation at the Academy, the Study Team

- Conducted focus groups with cadets, staff, and faculty

- Interviewed personnel at the Cadet Counseling Center

- Interviewed Academy leadership (the Superintendent and his staff, the Commandant and his staff, most of the AOCs, group staff, the Dean of the Faculty, and the Director of Athletics)

- Interviewed other key personnel who model, coach, mentor, and teach cadets

- Interviewed Gen (ret) Gamble, former USAFA Commandant regarding the 1994 Board Process

- Evaluated all aspects of Commissioning Suitability, including

  o Benchmarking Commissioning Suitability against similar frameworks at other Service academies and private military academies

The Study Team examined all facets of Commissioning Suitability as closely as possible to ascertain how Commissioning Suitability was being perceived, understood, and executed by staff, faculty, and cadets. Interviews were conducted onsite to gain insight into the sphere of influence and environments of those interviewed. Programs were scrutinized to help us to better understand character and leadership development in general, as well as to compare and contrast

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[84] See Annex 15 for a complete list of sources.

approaches to character and leadership development with those being executed at other Service academies.

We also spent several days interviewing subject matter experts and leaders at the

- OSD/HQ/AF
- U.S. Military Academy
- U.S. Naval Academy
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
- Air Force Reserve Officer Training Command
- Air Force OTS
- Air University and other Air Force education and professional development programs

The Commissioning Suitability Processes

Commissioning suitability is a process, not an event or a board.

—AFOATS faculty member

Historical Context of Commissioning Suitability

Working Group Review

In its July 1992 report, an Academy review panel articulated its belief that there were identifiable cadets who, while not demonstrating significant problems at the Academy, had exhibited persistent negative or marginal attitudes and/or behavior that may not suit their being commissioned in the Air Force. The panel suggested an implementation of processes to screen cadets for *commissioning suitability* before they move from the sophomore year to the junior year and incur a service commitment.

In an interview, Superintendent Lt Gen Hosmer reflected on the need to review cadets for worthiness of commissioning in their final year at the Academy. The panel recommended that the Academy consider implementation of such a review, as well as other measures to ensure that cadets meet the highest standards for commissioning. The panel also recommended that the Academy consider making distinctions between a cadet's suitability for commissioning and simply satisfying the minimum requirements to obtain an academic degree.

Commandant's Action in 1994

The early 1990s were a difficult period for the USAF and USAFA. Morale was down, particularly in the aftermath of the drawdowns after Desert Storm, the significant drop in available pilot slots, and the force reductions facing the graduating cadets. Cynicism among the

cadets was on the rise. Gen Gamble was sent to USAFA in 1993 by the Chief of Staff of the Air Force to take a fresh look at USAFA and to find the root causes of the issues consuming the Academy's staff and cadets. Even though he would be in the position for only 16 months, Gen Gamble reported that it was the hardest job he'd ever had in the Air Force.[85]

In short order, Gen Gamble confirmed the suspected issues and uncovered others as they related to cadet development as leaders of character. He believed that USAFA was more focused on the competence of cadets in academics than on character. His view, validated by the subsequent introduction of ODS in 2004, was that cadets needed to prove competence not only in academics, but in their character. He felt that exceptional performance in one area should not mask weak performance in another. He saw that when the Academy assessed cadets who were up for pilot selection, too much emphasis was on academic performance. He believed that cadets should meet *all* the standards—to a high degree—and have the desire and aptitude to fly. As he dug into the system, he discovered that many cadets with stellar academic records were poor performers in many other areas and were getting by solely on the strength of their classroom performance.

With this as a context, Gen Gamble, with the approval of the Superintendent, Maj Gen Hosmer, formed an Aptitude Board to review and screen the files of the members of the class of 1994 before pilot selection and commissioning. In a memorandum issued to the Cadet Wing, he outlined a new procedure to screen for aptitude for commissioned service that could result in disenrollment from USAFA for selected members of the class. The memorandum, "Improvements—Aptitude for Commissioned Service Evaluation System," suggested that senior leadership at the Academy did not believe that the MPA was a reliable and effective tool in assessing a cadet's suitability for commissioning. The MPA, according to the memo, ineffectively linked a cadet's conduct with aptitude for commissioning. It was believed that the MPA was diluted as a measure of character and aptitude, reflected only violations of conduct, and was not a true statement of aptitude for service.

At the time, aptitude for service was primarily considered a matter of conduct. Consequently, the record of conduct primarily determined whether or not a cadet was suitable to be commissioned. In an attempt to disengage conduct from aptitude, Gen Gamble developed and implemented a "whole person" assessment of a cadet's aptitude for commissioned service that included an Officer Aptitude Screening Board (OASB) composed of active-duty Air Force officers. His intention was to place a measure of subjectivity—professional judgment—into a determination of suitability using experienced professionals who served on the board. In his opinion, this is how the process of promotion and selection is done in USAF and would be appropriate for USAFA.

The OASB was tasked to review a cadet's entire record of performance at the Academy, including

- Personality data

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[85] Interview notes from meeting with Gen Gamble at ANSER, Colorado Springs, 15 March 2005.

- Capacity for service

- Inclination to adapt to military relationships

- Adherence to customs and traditions essential to the military service

- Strength of character

- Willingness to accept the limits on freedom of individual action in the traditional structure and the legal status that the military service imposes upon its members (USAFAR 537-1, paragraph 1-2d)

To obtain that information, the OASB examined command ratings, peer ratings, faculty ratings, participation in leadership positions, and adherence to the Academy's core values.

In its first review, the OASB determined that five cadets were not suitable for commissioning, even though these cadets had met the minimum academic, physical, and military standards set by the Academy and by law. These cadets were recommended for disenrollment and were disenrolled in March of 1994. A Congressional backlash, fueled by a national media outcry and potential lawsuits, resulted in four of the five cadets being reinstated. One cadet's disenrollment was affirmed for failing to meet the Academy's specified graduation requirements.

The primary criticism of Gen Gamble's "whole person" assessment was that the process was implemented too rapidly. Cadets were not told in advance of the additional screening process to determine whether or not they would be commissioned. The "whole person" assessment of cadets and the OASB process was abandoned shortly after Gamble's departure. Nobody we talked to seemed to know or understand why. But the message that Gen Gamble sent was the need for a more rigorous screening process to hold cadets accountable for their development and for USAFA to create the conditions for development not only of competence, but of character in equal measure.

Status of Commissioning Suitability at USAFA

Commissioning suitability is implied in the act of graduation. The current standard for commissioning suitability is referred to as *aptitude for service*. Only those cadets who, by their own misconduct or substandard performance, bring themselves to the attention of the chain of command are subsequently subject to review. There is no process that explicitly reviews or screens all cadets for aptitude or suitability. The system operates "by exception."

There is an elaborate and detailed review process to adjudicate the misconduct or substandard performance of cadets. HQ USAFA AFI #36-164[86] establishes the standards for determining aptitude for commissioned service for cadets who, *by exception*, are found deficient as characterized by "a pattern of performance or consistent inability to meet Cadet Wing standards raising doubts about their aptitude for commissioning." Cadets demonstrate a lack of aptitude for commissioned service if they

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[86] See HQ USAFA Instruction #36-164, "Review and Disposition of Deficient Cadets," dated 10 May 2004.

VIII. Commissioning Suitability

- Lack the personality, capacity, and inclination (natural or acquired) to adapt to military relationships, customs, and responsibilities
- Lack the strength of character and willingness to accept limits on freedom of individual action and the traditional structure and legal status of military service imposed on its members

A cadet can also demonstrate a lack of aptitude for service who has received either

- A Basic Cadet Training, cumulative, semester, or special MPA[87] of less than 2.0

- A deficient AOC rating of 1.5 or lower (on a scale of 4.0)

Currently, commissioning suitability is established through a number of standards and requirements, as outlined in USAFAI 36-164 and 36-165. These include the following:

- Demonstrate an aptitude for commissioned service and leadership

- Be satisfactory in conduct

- Be proficient in physical education

- Meet all military training requirements (complete the professional development curriculum and all summer training requirements) and academic requirements (satisfactorily complete the core curriculum or equivalent) and an academic major or the Bachelor of Science Program

- Have achieved an academic cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0, cumulative GPA of 2.0 in the core curriculum, and cumulative GPA of 2.0 in a specified major or BS program

- Meet the MPA of 2.0

- Meet the minimum cumulative Physical Education Average (PEA) of 2.0

While these requirements are the minimum standards by which commissioning suitability judgments are made, we do not find that they correlate with the ten ODS outcomes or the eight character outcomes. We believe that if the ten ODS outcomes and the eight character outcomes are the target of all developmental experiences at the Academy, then they should drive any commissioning suitability standards and process of screening cadets.

Unfortunately, the ten ODS outcomes and the eight character outcomes are general statements and are not easily amenable to objective assessment. These were described to us as "Operational Level outcomes," which is consistent with familiar military terminology as differentiated from tactical and strategic outcomes. To be meaningful in determining commissioning suitability,

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[87] The cumulative MPA is the average of previous semester and summer MPA. Semester MPA given by AOC, Groups AOC, 34th TRG/CC, or 34th TRW/AH after consideration of information from: instructors, coaches, officers-in-charge, primary raters, additional raters, Leadership Attribute Survey results, and the professional development program score.

however, these outcomes must be reduced to tactical components that can be specifically assessed.

The overarching and final assessment of aptitude for service is based on the professional judgments rendered by the Academic Board. However, the Academy currently has various subordinate boards that meet to discuss cadets who have not met minimum requirements in academics, physical, military, or honor areas, including those on probation. These boards include the

- Academic Review Committee

- Military Review Committee

- Physical Education Review Committee

- Summer Training Review Committee

Status of Commissioning Suitability Across Commissioning Sources

The Air Force does not have a clearly defined or described standard for commissioning suitability applicable to all accession sources. Furthermore, the components of commissioning suitability that are being used across accession sources are neither articulated in any documents nor universally accepted or understood. Without such an overarching definition or description of suitability for commissioning, it is difficult to assess the success or failure of accession sources in producing graduates suitable for commissioning.

We are not suggesting, however, that the standards across all commissioning sources necessarily be the same. There should be, however, some minimum standards that are clearly articulated and agreed upon by all USAF accession sources. Accession sources may choose to require more from their candidates than the established standards (and the USAF value of "excellence in all we do" suggests this), but all commissioned lieutenants should meet some minimum threshold.

Recent attempts to establish a definition and operational concept of commissioning suitability have not come to fruition. A definition and concept of commissioning suitability was floated throughout the Air Force for discussion, but yielded no consensus on this concept and was temporarily abandoned. The conceptualization of commissioning suitability, however, has been contentious. Consequently, the Air Force does not have a common operational agreement on what constitutes commissioning suitability.[88]

We also discovered that the Air Force has not established a forum that facilitates discussion and collaboration across commissioning sources to uniformly execute the CEMU curriculum or to evaluate cadets for commissioning suitability. Consequently, each accession source has established its own notions of what constitutes commissioning suitability.

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[88] The CEMU is a nonbonding agreement that serves to focus education and training efforts across commissioning sources but does bind them to a particular method of execution or uniform standard. See communications with Col (ret) Dave French, civilian assistant to the Under Secretary of the Air Force.

Furthermore, we did not discover any directive that requires USAFA, ROTC, and OTS to have minimum standards in executing the CEMU curriculum. Part of this disconnect is simply structural. ROTC and OTS come under the AFOATS, and they have a common parent headquarters. Both ROTC and OTS have worked together to unify their education and training efforts around the CEMU. The Academy, however, is a Direct Reporting Unit and is not under AFOATS command. The CEMU does not appear to have a significant influence on the Academy's decisions regarding training and education of officer candidates.[89]

Recently, HQ/AF has set up, within its Directorate of Plans, a group to oversee coordination and integration among commissioning sources. It is too early to determine the effectiveness of this organization or whether or not HQ/AF is the appropriate level from which to provide coordination and integration.

Commissioning Suitability Between USAFA and the Operational Air Force

Interestingly, USAFA does not routinely solicit "information from the field" to assess how their graduates are performing or to determine whether or not its education and training programs are effective in producing the intended results.[90] Without deliberately seeking feedback on the performance of graduates, the Academy cannot explicitly determine how well its programs are preparing leaders of character, now that the ODS has been operationalized.[91]

Psychological Instruments for Commissioning Suitability

We evaluated whether or not there might be a single test or instrument available that accession sources might use to determine commissioning suitability. We did not find such a test or assessment instrument suitable for this task and do not believe that any such test or instrument would be valid or reliable even if one could be created. But we do agree that a battery of instruments would be useful as a means to assist cadet self-awareness, guide developmental plans, and help USAFA to validate and improve the structure, process, and content of ODS. Additionally, these instruments would be important aspects of the screening process for commissioning suitability in making professional judgments concerning movement in leadership and character development. We discuss this more fully in the psychological instruments portion of this study.

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[89] The CEMU is the product of the Commissioning Training and Education Committee that's updated every two to three years generally and is a non-binding mutually agreed-upon set of curriculum areas that ought to be taught in pre-commissioning programs (see conversation with Dr. Thomas Benckly, Air University Curriculum Coordinator, dated 22 Feb 05).

[90] USMA has been going to the U.S. Army War College for a number of years to interview many of the 200+ former battalion commanders in the resident education program on their assessment of the quality of the lieutenants graduating from USMA who have served in their units. The USAFA recently began surveying recent graduates and their supervisors regarding satisfaction with the preparation of leaders of character at the USAFA.

[91] USAFA sent out a survey in 2005.

VIII. Commissioning Suitability

General Conceptual Issues

We were asked to recommend the most beneficial approach, processes, and timeframes for determining commissioning suitability based on character, attitude, and suitability for military life at the Academy. To accomplish that task, we have chosen to define and describe for the Air Force Academy a definition and concept for commissioning suitability. In doing so we have attempted to strike a balance between the objective and subjective[92] components of commissioning suitability.

We believe that suitability for commissioning should be a natural outcome of a well-orchestrated officer development system (see the ODS section of this report). If the programs and process of the ODS are well designed, synchronized, integrated, challenging, properly supported, and capable of assessment, then that system will produce, with high reliability and validity, leaders of character who are suitable for commissioning in the Air Force. The strength of the developmental process will, by its rigor, ensure cadets who are candidates for commissioning in the Air Force.

Commissioning suitability is a complex summary judgment process based on objective and subjective measures. Primarily, though, it is also the outcome of a process. At the Academy, that process is the ODS.[93] This process may culminate in some kind of screening process in which the measures (such as 360 ratings, commander assessments, faculty assessments, GPA, MPA, and PEA) embedded in the developmental process are formally reviewed by experienced professionals as to statistically significant number of cadets to assure validity and reliability of the judgments.

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[92]Our definition and description of commissioning suitability should fit into a professional model for legal purposes, particularly to conform to the *Horowitz* decision, which confirms the value, importance, and legal sufficiency of professional judgments as a component of determining commissioning suitability. *Note:* It is ironic that less objective data actually improve the legitimacy of subjective professional judgments that the courts have upheld. Use of tests and other objective data actually diminishes the legitimacy of professional subjective judgments. Therefore, we want to preserve subjective areas and not try to "objectify" everything.

[93] It is important to keep in mind that commissioning suitability is really a function of two things: (1) it is embedded in the *process of ODS* (as an element of the throughput of the organizational systems perspective), so if the programs s that define ODS experience are well designed, aggressively executed, and thoughtfully assessed, then ODS will produce leaders of character suitable for commissioning; (2) commissioning suitability is also an *outcome of ODS* (as output from an organizational systems perspective). This outcome would be manifest in an organized review of cadet records and products of ODS (objective and subjective measures and assessments), and a cadet would be declared as making satisfactory progress in ODS, and as having the potential for graduation and commissioning. Three key things must occur to increase the reliability and validity of the ODS process in producing leaders of character who are suitable for commissioning in the USAF: (1) USAFA must recruit, select, and educate (when appropriate) the best possible officers, NCOs, and civilians to serve on the faculty as AOC, AMTs, coaches, or members of the staff supporting ODS. It is on the shoulders of this cadre of professionals that the judgments, both objective and subjective, are made concerning the cadets' ultimate assessment of commission suitability. They must be the best—or the product can be called into question, as is the case currently. (2) Once selected, these personnel must be rigorously educated and trained in the ODS, their roles, and their responsibilities in this important, integrating developmental system. They must be committed in their roles and responsibilities. (3) These personnel also must be educated and trained in the character assessment and in the cadet assessment process they will be required to participate in as part of ODS, and be key in contributing to the determination of commissioning suitability.

VIII. Commissioning Suitability

Determination of commissioning suitability should be the natural outgrowth of existing developmental reviews and processes and should not be viewed as a significant "add-on" requirement to what is already a very time-consuming schedule for both cadets and staff. Input on character and suitability, provided within the context of ODS, must be carefully designed, tested, and validated as part of a larger, institutional effort in assessment. These inputs should be easy to complete, provide targeted observations on cadets that are behaviorally anchored judgments embedded in ODS, and be designed to provide specific performance information on the ten ODS outcomes.

Additionally, a determination of commissioning suitability is going to have a subjective component that is driven by professional judgments of the faculty, AOCs, coaches, and staff. Ultimately, the decision to declare a cadet suitable or not suitable for commissioning will be the culmination of the professional judgments (based on objective and subjective measures) rendered by the senior military leaders of USAFA. Making professional judgments is one of the key aspects of what it means to be a professional, a member of a profession, and it differentiates the military profession from other organizations in significant ways. Professionals, because of the nature of their education and development and the standards that govern their behavior, are best prepared to make the kind of judgments of character and commissioning suitability required within the context of ODS and essential for the long-term health of USAFA.

The Academy need not fear that its subjective determinations of cadet progress and performance will subject those decisions to legal challenge. The courts have given academic institutions wide latitude to render professional judgments about whether or not a student is performing adequately or is making sufficient progress.[94] Such judgments are by their nature subjective and evaluative and do not open the institution to judicial scrutiny.[95]

Like the decision of an individual professor as to the proper grade for a student in a course, the determination whether or not to dismiss a student for academic reasons requires, as we have suggested in this section, expert evaluation of cumulative information. In rendering these decisions, schools consider and weigh a variety of factors, not all of which are susceptible to objective evaluation. The educational process is not by its nature adversarial; instead it centers on a continuing relationship between faculty and students, "one in which the teacher must occupy many roles—educator, advisor, friend and, at times, parent-substitute."[96] Courts have been careful to avoid interfering with that relationship.

This is especially true as one advances through the varying regimes of the educational system, and the instruction becomes more individual and more specialized as it is at the Academy. Consequently, courts have not allowed challenges to these professional judgments where the individual is fully informed of the institution's dissatisfaction with his or her progress and the danger that this poses to timely graduation and continued enrollment. As long as the institution's

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[94] *Board of Curators of the University of Missouri, et al.* v. *Horowitz*, 435 U.S. 78, 90 (1977).
[95] *Id.*
[96] *Goss* v. *Lopez*, 419 U.S. 565, 594 (1975) (Powell, J., dissenting).

ultimate decision is careful and deliberate, the decision will be sufficient to comply with the Due Process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[97]

To ensure that these professional judgments are reliable and valid, USAFA must show that it carefully and thoughtfully recruits, selects, and educates (as appropriate based on job requirements—for example, earning a master's degree or Ph.D. for faculty and AOCs) all those who come into contact with the cadets and who will be rendering professional judgments on the progress of these cadets as leaders of character, worthy of commissioning in the USAF. Additionally, these members of the Academy staff must be educated and trained in the structure, process, and content of ODS and know what their specific roles, responsibilities, and relationship are in this central cadet development process.

Academy staff must also be educated and trained in making judgments of character. A key aspect of character development is the need to create a culture of character. The creation of this culture is leveraged against the requirement for a faculty and staff who clearly understand character, are on their own personal journey of development within the context of character-related thinking and behavior, and demonstrate a level of mastery of the skills, knowledge, and abilities associated with character development such that they can serve as effective role models for the cadets.

The faculty and staff must also learn the psychological instruments that they will be using to provide these important judgments and be trained in the appropriate ways to provide feedback and to coach and mentor the cadets in their developmental journey.

Definition and Description of Commissioning Suitability

Commissioning suitability is a definitive statement made about a cadet's worthiness for commissioning in the Air Force as an outcome assessment of a cadet's successful journey through the 47-month ODS. This determination is made through gathering information on cadet performance within three broad dimensions: legal, administrative, and statutory; competency-based; and character-based. A cadet is suitable for commissioning if the individual has met all administrative and regulatory requirements and is competent in required knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes as represented by meeting standards in the three key programs (intellectual, professional, and physical). The cadet must also have demonstrated sufficient development and the appropriate character essential for service in the military and the subsequent lifetime service to nation.

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[97] *Id* at 85.

A cadet would be considered suitable for commissioning if he or she has[98]

- Met all the legal, administrative, and regulatory requirements (all clearly specified and objective) stipulated by USAFA and USAF regulations for graduation and commissioning

- Demonstrated the fundamental knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes (as delineated in course and program goals, objectives, and/or standards) in the intellectual, professional, and physical programs essential for graduation and commissioning

- Demonstrated the fundamental character (ethical, spiritual, and social competencies) warranting commission as an officer and leader in USAF

- Demonstrated the competencies of self-awareness, adaptability, and learning essential for continued leadership development, not only at USAFA, but also in the USAF

- Demonstrated a motivation for lifetime service with the potential for continued growth and competency and character for service

Assessing commissioning suitability is a summary judgment based on multiple indicators. Thus, there is no single measure of commissioning suitability; rather, it is a multidimensional concept that must be assessed through multiple measurements over time. Furthermore, suitability is a measure of character and competence. A cadet must have competence—measured in the intellectual, professional, and physical performance dimensions, as well as character—measured in the spiritual, ethical, and social performance dimensions. (Competence dimensions also apply—in that measures of character, such as teamwork, consideration for others, and respect for others in the classroom, are or can be embedded in the grade.)[99]

Essential Aspects of Commissioning Suitability

The essential aspects of commissioning suitability can be categorized by objective and subjective measures. One must clearly understand which parts of the commissioning suitability assessment are *objective* and which parts are *subjective*, based on professional, summary judgments (such as the Horowitz case) associated with a number of indicators (for example, demonstrated behaviors).

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[98] These five dimensions of commissioning suitability are all readily connectable to the ten ODS outcomes. In a shorthand summary, the ODS outcomes can be represented by ten attributes: knowledge, decisiveness, decision-making skill, communication, cultural awareness, lifelong learning, adaptability, integrity, spiritual awareness, and motivation. These attributes, as summary concepts for the ten ODS outcomes, appear in one or more of these five dimensions.

[99] The measures normally associated with competence—academic, physical, and military—have some significant objective measures already in place within the context of the USAFA program; whereas the measures associated with character—spiritual, moral/ethical, and social—do not have objective measures in place—although character is one of the most important aspects of the commissioning suitability assessment. It is also true that the measures of competence have elements of character implicitly embedded in some form. Consider "teasing out" the character-related components of the objective ratings (such as GPA, MPA, and PEA) and building a separate category for character.

VIII. Commissioning Suitability

- *Objective*[100] measures and considerations:
  - o Regulatory and administrative considerations.
  - o A based on a minimum acceptable standard of 2.0.
  - o PEA consisting of the grades in the cadet's physical education classes and testing opportunities and based on a minimum average of 2.0.
  - o MPA that includes evaluations on
    - ▪ Military science courses
    - ▪ Conduct issues
    - ▪ Aptitude issues
    - ▪ Leadership Attribute Survey
    - ▪ Professional Military Learning (PML)
  - o Psychological instruments and other assessment tools as "benchmarks" for helping the cadet understand "where they are in their own development" (an essential aspect of ODS and the Leadership Growth Model). By assessing the effectiveness of ODS and better crafting the leadership experiences and developmental interventions, the Academy will be more effective in enabling cadets to continue in their developmental journey as leaders of character.
- *Subjective*[101] measures and considerations that are included in the judgment of suitability for commissioning:
  - o Judgments by professionals will carry a lot of weight in this aspect of the consideration for suitability. Selection and education of these "judges"—as well as faculty, staff, AOCs, AMTs, etc.—is critical. They must be some of the USAF's best and brightest.
  - o 360 evaluations: peer, subordinate, seniors (such as AOCs), faculty and staff, coaches, etc. These evaluations are provided to the AOC, whose task is to help the cadets make sense of these instruments of feedback and use that information to contribute to continued development based on the cadets' ILDP.

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[100] It is important to understand exactly what goes into each of these scores. The AOCs report that the academic faculty has 20 percent of MPA, plus the full weight of the PEA, and they see this as an inordinate percentage based on their exposure to cadet behavior (which generally occurs only within the context of the classroom). Which 20 percent is provided? What is the format? Which dimensions of military performance are evaluated? Is this also related to character issues?

[101] This is a key challenge for USAFA. USAFA does not, as far as we can tell, have a robust system in place that works at developing the *Be*—which is the real essence of ODS and the engine that powers the development of professional identity—see the Rhodes paper (2001). The leader development challenge at USAFA is to leverage the power of team and organizational leadership; however, upon graduation, 50 percent of cadets will not be collective leaders. They will lead peers in the profession (demonstrating self-awareness). The collective leadership design must be good and be articulated clearly to the cadets of its value within ODS, even though many do not see themselves as being collective leaders for quite some time. But the most powerful aspect of these subjective judgments are those that come from the faculty, AOCs, staff, and coaches. They must be the best USAF has to offer since they are rendering judgments on those who constitute USAF's future leadership.

- o Effective completion of leadership positions and leadership experiences (one can learn a lot of leadership without having to actually be a focal leader) and the evaluations associated with these experiences.
- o A guided, reflective journaling process as a core element in ODS (for example, the idea of an embedded leader developmental portfolio process across the cadet's four-year developmental experience).
- o Requirements and student work products associated with the four character-development programs embedded in ODS. These experiences would require cadets to prepare in advance, pass some measurement instrument for mastery (such as an examination or reflective journal assignment), and integrate the learning challenges suggested by these character-based interventions as part of their ILDPs to ensure continued practice and reflection:[102]
  - ▪ VECTOR (Vital Effective Character Through Observation and Reflection), 4th class
  - ▪ R&R (Respect and Responsibility), 3rd class
  - ▪ LIFT (Leader in Flight Today), 2nd class
  - ▪ ACES (Advanced Character Enrichment Seminar), 1st class

Application at the Academy and Across Accession Sources

Finally, it is important to understand that the concepts embedded in the ODS and the commissioning suitability framework are designed for implementation in the unique context of USAFA. See Figure 9. These concepts are also intended for application in ROTC and OTS (but tailored to their contextual and situational constraints). ODS and commissioning suitability are not just wedded to USAFA, but they should be the conceptual frameworks for leadership development (in structure, process, and content) that has more universal application throughout the USAF. ODS and the notion of commissioning suitability should be the gold standard for all commissioning sources and for the Air Force Development Doctrine.

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[102] Cadets must be held accountable in as many ways as possible in the character-based educational and training programs. These measures would include reading assignments, reflections, and case study analyses.
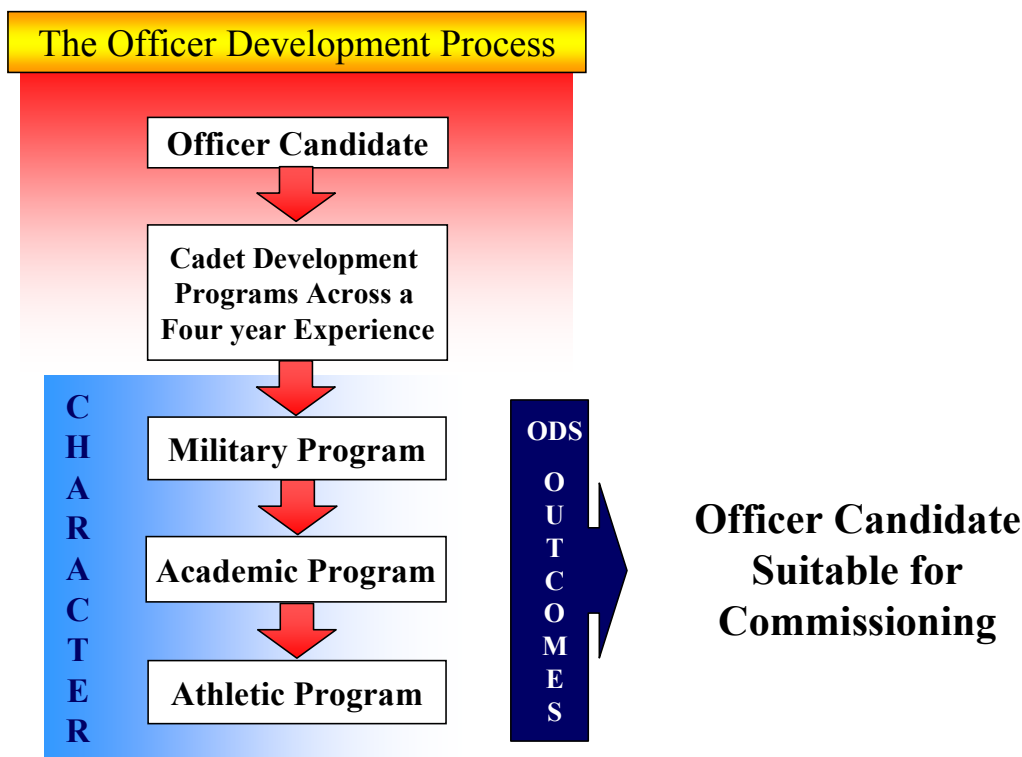
Figure 9: The Officer Development Process

Commissioning Suitability Findings , Discussions and Recommendations

The following discussion of the findings and recommendations associated with commissioning suitability is the outcome of our interviews, focus groups, and research during the period July 2004 through March 2005. More specific guidance for commissioning suitability will be provided in the Action Plan.

Finding: USAF and USAFA do not have a definition or description for commissioning suitability. The current use of *aptitude for service* does not provide an adequate basis for determining commissioning suitability under ODS.

Discussion: Commissioning suitability is a multidimensional construct without a single measure that represents what it means to be suitable for commissioning. Commissioning suitability is actually a summary judgment that represents the outcome of specific programs and processes associated with character and leadership development. This construct is best assessed by both objective and subjective measures that should be embedded in the structure, process, and content of ODS. These measures should be integral to ODS.

Commissioning suitability is an invented term that has emerged in USAF and USAFA language beginning initially with Gen Gamble's attempt to apply criteria for commissioning suitability to the cadet wing in 1994. Since then, it has been regularly used in the context of the commissioning process associated with the Air Force's three commissioning sources: USAFA,

ROTC, and OTS. Although it seems to be used now throughout USAF and USAFA, we have not been able to find in our research that anyone has attempted to specifically define or describe this concept with a set of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attributes amenable to judgment and measurement.

During our review, we found no operational definition of *commissioning suitability* or a common understanding of what this construct means and what its associated components are. This should not suggest that the standards should be the same across commissioning sources, but there must be some *minimum* standards upon which commissioning suitability judgments are made. Accession sources may exceed the established standards (and the USAF value of *excellence in all we do* suggests this), but all commissioned lieutenants should meet some common standard.

The intent of a commissioning suitability or board process is in the best interest of USAF. The Air Force needs to know that its accession sources are producing leaders of character as measured against some minimum uniform standards. The problem is that the current concept of commissioning suitability is vague and is not measured against any uniformed standards. Commissioning suitability is a measure still in search of an agreed-upon and accepted meaning.

Recommendation C1: *USAF and commissioning sources must clearly describe commissioning suitability as an operational concept, including a detailed description of its components and the manner in which the components are measured and developed.* Commissioning suitability should include, at a minimum:

1. Administrative and statutory-based requirements.

2. Competency-based requirements: GPA, MPA, and PEA.

3. Character-based requirements: summary assessment of cadet behavior in the areas of spirituality, ethical behavior, and social development. This would also include assessments of cadet performance in the key character-based education programs, such as VECTOR, R&R, LIFT, and ACES.

4. The first three requirements must be appropriately connected to the officership identities (warrior spirit, leader of character, professional, and servant of the nation), the ten officer development system outcomes, Air Force values, and Air Force Force Development Doctrine, AFDD 1-1.

Commissioning suitability measures also need to be behaviorally anchored and based on what can be observed. USAFA, or any commissioning source, must identify and describe the behaviors associated with leaders of character and those suitable for commissioning, then provide assessments from multiple perspectives on the observed behavior. In sum, these observations serve as the basis for determination of military aptitude and commissioning suitability.

Finding: There has not been a systemic structure or process established for the Air Force and the commissioning sources to collaboratively define and describe commissioning suitability and to enforce its effective application.

Discussion: There is not a common structure that requires USAFA, ROTC, and OTS to have agreed-upon standards for commissioning suitability or accountability for accomplishing the CEMU curriculum to a specified standard.

The Air Force Academy and the other commissioning sources must deliver to the USAF newly minted second lieutenants who meet the specific commissioning suitability standards and are self-aware, developmentally oriented leaders and motivated to lifelong learning and continued development as leaders of character. USAF is obligated and required to continue development in the educational/training institution and the operational force. The issue of suitability is not static, (not an end state), but defines a developmental process that requires officers to continue to develop as they mature in the profession.

The suitability judgment for USAFA students can be different than for ROTC or OTS graduates, but the baseline standards for suitability should be the same for all commissioning sources. Because USAFA offers a unique developmental context not possible in ROTC or OTS, it can have higher standards.

Finally, commissioning suitability is the outcome of effective programs and processes and is not a single measurement. If a cadet has successfully completed specific programs and has negotiated specific processes, then by default the cadet is suitable for commissioning in the USAF.

Recommendation C2: *If USAFA is to be the premier institution for developing leaders of character, it should take the lead to set the standard for commissioning suitability.*

Finding: There is not a clear statement of the importance an AOC plays in assessing a cadet's suitability for commissioning.

Discussion: We have not found a clear statement regarding the importance that the AOCs play in assessing a cadet's suitability for commissioning. Feedback from AOCs in multiple interview sessions suggests that they have an ambiguous understanding of their role in assessing cadets. Many understand that the intention of the AOC program and position is central to ODS and is the integrator of all character and leadership development experiences for the cadets.

AOCs believe that their evaluation of cadet development as leaders of character should be the focal point of any assessment of commissioning suitability. Current AOCs suggest that their recommendations concerning the disposition of cadets with character-based issues are ignored, are discounted, or do not carry appropriate weight. The percentage of MPA (where character and aptitude for service exist) controlled by the AOCs is low and sends a message that their evaluations of cadet character are not as valued as others' evaluations. For example, the academic faculty's and coaches' evaluations constitute 20 percent of MPA and take away, in the AOCs' mind, their centrality in their role as the integrator of the leadership and character development programs.

Many AOCs felt that commissioning suitability assessment is best viewed as a process, not an event (for example, a board proceeding). It is an ongoing assessment based on multiple inputs

from many sources that are reviewed and summarized by the AOC under the supervision of the Commandant of Cadets. But there is a lack of confidence (by some) in the commissioning suitability process because some cadets in high-profile cases have been commissioned in spite of significant evidence that this should not happen, with no explanation given.

Recommendation C3: *AOCs should hold significant weight as the evaluator of character and leadership attributes in determining commissioning suitability. At some point, USAFA has to clearly articulate where the input for commissioning suitability assessment comes from, in what format, and how often. Additionally, it may be necessary to consider a weighting system for the inputs to commissioning suitability.*

IX. Psychological Instruments

Introduction

As we noted above in our discussions of the officer development processes and commissioning suitability, to make the complex abilities/outcomes associated with ODS teachable, criteria must be established for the ability desired. These criteria serve two purposes. First, the provide cadets with a tangible goal for learning and development. Second, the give the staff and faculty a standard for judging and substantiating that a cadet has demonstrated the ability.

As we also noted, evaluating a cadet's demonstration of desired abilities is a multi dimensional process. This section explores various assessment tools that can provide diagnostic feedback and assist the reflective practice of self assessment by each cadet. Our suggestions are intended to provide the Academy with the tools to facilitate a continuous process of assessment that improves learning and character development and integrates it with assessment.

What We Were Asked to Do

The Study Team was asked to consider the use of psychological testing to

- Assess applicants seeking admissions to the Academy
- Assess cadet development through the 47-month ODS experience
- Assess the cadets for commissioning suitability

Methodology

After performing a cursory review of over 600 psychological instruments, the Team focused on 26 specific instruments for further examination. Through extensive research, the Team determined that psychological testing and/or instruments would not, alone, be useful in screening applicants for admission or for determining commissioning suitability. We found that there is no "one size fits all" instrument to determine a cadet's character. Nevertheless, we have provided a further analysis of four specific instruments that we feel may be beneficial to assessing cadet development across the 47-month experience.

The following approach was taken to accomplish these tasks:

- Identify one test (or a small battery of tests) that can provide insights into a broad spectrum of traits, the results of which can be used to assess, infer, and predict desirable cadet behavior
- Identify one or two specific tests that can be applied during the cadet development process that focuses on specific traits purported to be inherent to achieving ideal cadet and officer standards

IX. Psychological Instruments

The exploration of character-related measurement instruments was conducted through general research and an online search through the Mental Measurements Yearbook database. Key words that were selected for search were those determined to be consonant with project efforts to identify, admit, and advance those individuals capable of achieving personal growth in support of the mission, aims, and doctrine of USAFA. Key words searched and their domain size include the following:

- Character (57)
- Commitment to excellence (0)
- Courage (6)
- Decisiveness (6)
- Emotional intelligence (8)
- Ethical reasoning (0)
- Moral reasoning (3)
- Honesty (25)
- Integrity (98)
- Respect (400)
- Responsibility (169)
- Risk taking (22)
- Selflessness (0)
- Altruism (10)
- Self-discipline (11)
- Self-respect (3)
- Spirituality (9)
- Stamina (8)
- Miscellaneous

A search through all potential tests within the domains listed above yielded approximately 600 unique measurement tools available for use. Initial review eliminated tests from further consideration if they were inappropriate because of the population age group (for example, early childhood), population characteristics (such as psychopathologies and/or head injury), population standardization (such as test results that would be measured against an inappropriate population, like illiterates or the marginally educated), or purpose of relevance (such as predictive of intimate and marital relationships rather than empathy with colleagues) to this project.

Tests were also eliminated from consideration if the reviewer comments suggested serious flaws in the psychometric soundness of a test. Paramount indices of soundness include reliability (test

consistency) and validity (test accurately assesses what it purports to measure). Within the category of validity, key subsets include face validity (how clearly an item reveals the purpose of the question or the test itself), content validity (based on literature and available evidence and how accurately the test measures a representative sample of the subject matter), criterion validity (sometimes referred to as predictive validity, meaning the ability of a test to predict behavior), construct validity (the extent to which a test measures the factors of what is intended to be measured), and discriminant validity (the ability of test scores to discriminate different groups).

Twenty-six tests were selected for further review and consideration, based on compelling information and reviewer guidance:

- Adult Personality Inventory (Revised)
- Balanced Emotional Empathy Scale
- BarOn Emotional Quotient Inventory
- California Psychological Inventory (Third Edition)
- Comprehensive Personality Profile
- Defining Issues Test
- Emotional Judgment Inventory
- Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
- FIRO-Btm Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation-Behavior
- Hogan Personality Inventory (Revised)
- Jackson Personality Inventory (Revised)
- Life Roles Inventory
- Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory—2
- New York Longitudinal Scales Adult Temperament Questionnaire
- NEO-4
- Revised NEO Personality Inventory
- Rokeach Value Survey
- Salience Inventory
- Situational Leadership
- Six-Factor Personality Questionnaire
- Selby MillSmith Values Indices
- Spiritual Well-Being Scale
- Structured Interview for the Five-Factor Model of Personality
- Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (2002 Edition)

- Values Scale (Second Edition)
- Work Profile Questionnaire for Emotional Intelligence

The Process of Using Psychological Instruments

An instrument to measure personality, specifically those components believed to encompass character, has not yet been developed. A number of existing tests lay claim to identifying, with some accuracy, traits that may provide insights into the moral and ethical choices that might typify an individual's conduct.

For example, in the 1940s, Raymond Cattell's "Big Five" paradigm posited fundamental personality dimensions consisting of *agreeableness*, *conscientiousness*, *extraversion*, *neuroticism*, and *openness*. Since then, there have been multiple attempts to delineate and reconstruct relationships among these constructs. Subsequent generations of measurement tools include such tests as the Adult Personality Inventory, the Jackson Personality Inventory, NEO-4 and Revised NEO, the Six-Factor Personality Questionnaire, and the Structured Inventory for the Big Five.

There have been concerted attempts to describe and measure humanistic traits to illuminate attributes of "morality," "spirituality," and "emotional intelligence." Examples of such measures are the Defining Issues Test, the Rokeach Values Survey, the Spiritual Well-Being Scale, and the Emotional Judgment Inventory.

Another group of tests that has become popular since the late 1970s can be aggregated into industrial or workplace psychological inventories. An overarching objective of these measures has been to predict work behaviors and to identify individuals whose personality attributes would contribute to the goals and ideals of the unit, who would perform with honesty and loyalty, and who would demonstrate empathy towards fellow workers. Limited research into characteristics thought best suited for high-reliability occupations, such as civil aviation and military pilots, has endeavored to identify traits within individuals who are "relaxed but alert," "influence behavior before using authority," and are "more likely to be stable and extraverted," among other traits.[103] Additionally, certain personality characteristics that are considered to be related to successfully assuming command roles within a high-reliability occupation or emergency situation tend to demonstrate "emotional stability," "stress resistance," "decisiveness," "self-confidence," "self-awareness," and "willingness to assume leadership." Representative examples of these instruments are the Comprehensive Personality Profile, the Life Roles Inventory, and the Situational Leadership Test.

Many of these instruments have overlapping themes, and not all focus on or delineate specific aspects of character germane to this Study. We identify the most relevant and appropriate measurement tools with the highest level of reliability and validity considering

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[103] David C. Funder, "Accuracy in Personality Judgment," in Brent W. Roberts and Robert Hogan, *Personality Psychology in the Workplace* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2002) pp. 121-140.

- Cost to administer

- Ease of administration

- Ease of scoring

- Test time involved

- Whether or not a test can be administered to an individual or to a group

Psychological Instruments Findings, Discussions and Recommendations

Finding: Behavior, as described earlier, is not static. Rather, behavior is an aggregation of inherent and developed traits that are situation dependent. The complexity of measuring and predicting situationally dependent behavior is exacerbated by the recognition that no one test can accurately identify or infer "good character." Therefore, a multi-tiered approach may best serve the process of selecting, assessing, and shaping cadets progressing through the FCS.

Discussion: At the high margin of adolescence, personality is the culmination of an abundant and diverse childhood experience. Before this perimeter is reached, a majority of decisions have come from, or have been guided by, parents, school, and the faith community. The job of shaping character, at this point, has reached a critical next juncture. The transition from juvenile to young adult places this cohort at the brink of engaging in complex reasoning and interpreting society's moral code independently through the challenging and life-altering decisions that include

- Which college to attend

- What field of study to pursue

- Commitment to an intimate relationship

- The pursuit of modalities that will ensure financial support of self and family

At the time of college entrance, society rightly expects that the early-imposed lessons of youth transfer into adult behaviors that demonstrate the capacity to engage in consistent and acceptable moral and ethical decision making. This transitional period, through entrance into either a school of higher learning or the job market, provides the vehicle to confirm these invaluable lessons. The task specifically before our Service academies, therefore, is to identify those students who are most worthy of the time and investment in this process. This would include those who truly wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to learn and grow along a moral and ethical path that will lead to positions as strong officers, leaders, and contributors to their country and society.

The search for these "ideal" candidates is not a quest to identify individuals who have made (or who claim to have made) consistently right decisions in their youth. Rather, it is a search for those who have learned and grown from their mistakes. Assessing written essays may provide insight into the judgment and character of those seeking admission to USAFA.

Recommendation P1 (Admissions): *The use of psychological instruments in conjunction with the admissions process is not recommended. Assessing written essays may provide insights into the judgment and character of those seeking admission to USAFA.*

Recommendation P2 (ODS): *Use the following instruments within the ODS framework:*

  a. Baseline cadet assessment

   The NEO-PI-R, the Defining Issues Test, and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test should be administered at admissions to give faculty a baseline of personality indicators from which to implement character development strategy.

  b. Pre-commissioning assessment

   The Defining Issues Test and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test should be administered 18 to 20 months after admissions and as component of the assessments engaged in to determine commissioning suitability.

  c. Character coaching and development

   The Rokeach Values Survey offers a mechanism for developing character growth. Use of this tool by a skilled professional should be considered a potential framework from which to guide individuals who may require direction in moral and personal growth.

It should be noted that the value of a personality measurement tool is to both evaluate and coach optimal behavior traits. The necessity of professional guidance in this process cannot be overstated. Instruments should be administered, interpreted, and debriefed by qualified personnel only and must be part of an overall developmental program using the results to adjust the cadet's ILDP.

The following table provides recommendations that may best meet the overall needs and goals of USAFA. The table summarizes salient points with regard to test objectives, strengths, and weaknesses, and administrative considerations.

IX. Psychological Instruments

Test Name	Test Objective & Description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Group vs. Individual	Cost	Time
Defining Issues Test	Provides insights, reported in "stages," about the thought processes, reasoning, and judgments brought to moral dilemmas. Subject The subject is presented with a situation or dilemma and asked to (1) make a decision, and (2) provide a rationale for that decision.	Easy to use. The manual provides extensive information on reliability, validity, and norms. Reliability is good with the test: retest correlations of .71 to .82 for a P index (percentage of principled thinking) and .67 to .92 for a D index (composite score). Research has indicated that the test is resistant to fake responses. The test is useful in measuring longitudinal change.	Test dilemmas may be dated and familiar to potential subjects. There are limited normative data for U.S. minority and ethnic groups. Normative data are pooled and may not adequately discriminate between small differences in age groups. It requires additional technical data to support reliability and validity. Results may be subject to clerical errors if the test is hand scored (a scoring service is available).	Group.	1987 Price data: $25 per kit (manual, both forms, and scoring information), $1.90 or less per prepaid scoring sheet.	30-40 minutes (short form) 40-50 minutes (long form)
Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test	Measures a person's capacity for reasoning with emotional information by assessing the ability to perceive emotions, use emotions to facilitate thinking and problem solving, understand emotions, and manage emotions for personal growth. The test scores yield a "total" and four "branch" scores: Perceiving Emotions, Facilitating Thought, Understanding Emotions, and Managing Emotions.	Generally considered a well-developed instrument with "favorable" reliability and validity. It may be a useful tool in occupational settings requiring effective interpersonal skills in emotionally intense situations.	The concept of "emotional intelligence" and its use as a measurement tool is still evolving. More normative data are required on Black and Asian populations. Test score validity is sensitive to omitted items.	Individual or group. Administered through a test booklet or the Internet. Test scores and interpretative information are sent to a test administrator for interpretation.	2002 price data: $50 per kit (manual, one profile summary report, and one item booklet), $30 per mail-in/faxed report	Untimed, but it takes approx. 30-45 minutes

IX. Psychological Instruments

Test Name	Test Objective & Description	Strengths	Weaknesses	Group vs. Individual	Cost	Time
Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO-PI-R)	Measures five domains of normal adult personality: neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness to experience (O), agreeableness (A), and conscientiousness (C).	Excellent domain reliabilities ranging from .86 to .95. Good normative data. Strong construct, convergent, and divergent validity.	Theoretical base requires further conceptualization. More useful in vocationally-oriented settings than those more clinically-oriented.	Group.	1994 price data: $92 per kit (manual, 10 each of 2 item booklets, 25 hand- scorable answer sheets, 25 each of 2 adult profile forms, and 25 feedback sheets); more price information is available	30-40 minutes
Rokeach Values Survey	Identifies values of importance to the subject. The framework assumes that values are "an enduring belief [that a] specific mode of conduct … is personally or socially acceptable …" "Terminal," or end-state, values include sense of accomplishment, freedom, happiness, national security, salvation, self-respect, and wisdom. "Instrumental" values, or those that describe an individual's beliefs concerning desirable modes of conduct, include clean, courageous, helpful, honest, independent, obedient, polite, responsible, and self-controlled.	Ranking paradigm leads to ipsative measures, useful for measuring within, not across, individuals. Careful attention to the selection of value terms. Simple administration. Adequate test-retest reliability.	The test is not scored, but test items are ranked. Ranking values may be arbitrary. Ranking tasks is difficult. Moderate reliability. Normative data should be updated. Useful with older or college students capable of handling verbal abstractions.	Group.	1992 price data: $38 per 25 test booklets, $29.50 per manual	10-20 minutes

Recommendation P3 (Commissioning Suitability): *The use of psychological instruments alone to determine commissioning suitability is not recommended. Rather, we recommend the use of instruments identified in P2 to assess cadet development over the 47-month experience, to provide information that would increase cadets' self-awareness, and to assist in the determination of commissioning suitability.*

Final Thoughts

Developing a culture of character among future cadets requires a process that crosses all mission elements and extends out to the initial recruitment and selection of potential applicants. It is important that high school career counselors and Congressional offices understand the critical need to identify youth capable of strong character development. Educational materials should be developed for these groups to improve their knowledge of selection criteria and the ideal traits that should be sought among potential applicants.

Additionally, measurement tools (not contained herein) are available that can facilitate identifying leadership and coaching skills among staff and faculty. The use of one or more of these tools may improve the capabilities of USAFA faculty to better develop the character of cadets. A program of faculty assessment and coaching may be a worthwhile, if not essential, investment in building the optimal USAFA cadets of the future.

The Academy should establish an assessment center with a full-time staff to administer psychological instruments, interpret the results, and provide feedback to the cadets. This center would assist in developing ILDPs, consistent with our recommendations, to facilitate character and leadership development. This service is being provided to 50 cadets who have volunteered for the LEAD program. There is a long waiting list. This center could also offer assistance services to cadets who want to improve their leadership skills.

IX. Psychological Instruments

Annex 1: Finding and Recommendations

Strategic Level— HQ/AF and Sec USAF

Finding: USAFA is not viewed as "the *Air Force's* Academy."

Recommendation S1: *Establish policies procedures and incentives in recruiting and selection of Air Force personnel to encourage duty at the commissioning source institutions.* This is particularly important in the short term, where the CSAF has established a policy, but the field is waiting to see whether this is rewarded in a tangible and visible way.

When warranted, favorable promotions for AOCs, as well as subsequent opportunities for command and other professionally challenging assignments, should follow an AOC's duty at the Academy. Promotion boards should be given clear communications and instructions regarding the roles and responsibilities of AOCs at USAFA. Investigate the impact of requesting an increase in the allocation of DP slots, and then carefully allocate those to high-performing AOCs.

Recommendation S2: *Plan to establish a Center for Character and Leadership at USAFA.* This would be the Air Force's premier center for research, education, and training for character and leadership development.

Recommendation S3: *Extend the principles embedded in ODS to the operational Air Force— through the PME courses and the professional military development programs in operational units.*

Finding: There is no consistent, deliberate process to link the pre-commissioning process and content to the 21st-century operational Air Force's needs. This has not been a significant problem in the past, but it needs attention to ensure future congruence in a rapidly changing world environment.

Recommendations S4: *Review knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and competencies required of a 21st-century USAF officer and align USAFA curriculum accordingly.* Consider rebalancing engineering and humanities requirements. Coordinate the necessary force development requirements for each USAFA major to ensure that total force development needs are being met.

Recommendation S5: *Pre-commissioning curricula need to be reviewed by the Air University Command Board of Advisers in conjunction with their review of the relevancy of PME. It might not be annual, but it should be periodic (two to three years).*

Recommendation S6: *Conduct an annual survey to determine how USAFA—and ROTC and OTS—are or are not meeting the needs of the operational Air Force. Make sure content is USAF specific and ODS specific and that it addresses the six ODS developmental dimensions, the four officership traits, and the three core values*

Recommendation S7: *Require and resource MAJCOMs to support USAFA and ROTC cadet operational opportunities.*

Recommendation S8: *Endorse and resource Academy efforts to expand a Returning Graduate Program.*

Finding: USAF and USAFA could better partner with other commissioning sources, military Services and Service academies to address areas of common interest and concern. This can be assisted by senior leaders of the military Services.

Recommendation S9: *Expand the capabilities of the Air Force to oversee operational implementation of commissioning suitability programs and processes, facilitate cross-talk, share best practices, and be a resource for all of the commissioning source programs.*

Recommendation S10: *Joint venture with the other Services to explore development of psychological instruments to better assess character for officer candidates for admission, development, and commissioning suitability.*

Recommendation S11: *Joint venture with the other Services to develop pre-commissioning programs for the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of officer development.*

Finding: External environmental demands placed on USAFA by the media, Congress, and graduates, combined with the significant efforts required for internal transformational change at USAFA, create the need for a Provost or Deputy Superintendent at USAFA.

Recommendation S12: *Establish and fill the position of a Provost or Deputy Superintendent, as a two-star equivalent position, to ensure integration of ODS across the mission elements. This person needs to have a strong academic, operational, and, if possible, athletics background with proven abilities to build consensus among disparate groups. The term of service should be a minimum of five years to provide continuity of oversight during the transformation period.*

Admissions

Finding: USAFA's expectations regarding character are not clearly defined or described in the application and admissions process.

Recommendation A1: *Define, describe, and explain the importance of character and communicate it to USAFA staff involved in the admissions process, ALOs, authors of letters of recommendation, and congressional offices and their interview panels or boards.*

Finding: The Admissions Office is insufficiently resourced for purely research and analytical admissions functions.

Recommendation A2: *Increase the ongoing research and analysis capabilities of the Air Force Academy Directorate of Admissions by adding a staff of two full-time analysts.*

Finding: Several interviewees and survey respondents suggested that USAFA ought to re-examine and carefully define what type of cadet is most desirable to attend USAFA.

Recommendation A3: *Evaluate and clearly identify what type of cadets USAFA seeks for the future.*

Recommendation A4: *Collaborate with the other Service academies on updating the* Congressional Guide fro Admission to the United States Service Academies *to significantly strengthen the discussion on the importance of character. Identify the Service academies' view of the important role congressional offices can play in assisting with the conditioning of the candidate on the character expectations of the Service academies. Identify the benefits a congressional interview panel can play in this regard.*

Finding: The numerical dominance of the ALO score certainly means that the role of USAFA admissions panel members during the admissions panel review is negligible, especially when compared with other admissions panels reviewed by the Study Team.

Recommendation A5: *Empower the admissions panel with more influence in the admissions process by either revising the ALO interview Form 4060 or revising the overall weight of the inputs from admissions panels (USAFA Form O-379). Reduce the content of the candidate folders reviewed by the admissions panel to focus primarily on character-related content. Ensure that a representative from the Center for Character Development serves as a member of each admissions panel. Adopt a review process similar to that of other Service Academies and the USAF ROTC scholarship boards where each panel member reviews and scores each record.*

Finding: Currently, USAFA considers but does not require letters of recommendation.

Recommendation A6: *Require letters of recommendation from three persons who have a relationship with the candidate and can comment on the candidate's character.* This may include coaches, clergy, employers, professionals, business-persons, community leaders, educators, and former or current military officers, especially USAF. Either revise the existing USAFA Form 145, "School Official's Evaluation of Candidate," to support this requirement or eliminate it.

Finding: According to admissions office officials, USAFA currently cannot guarantee the confidentiality of sources for letters of recommendation even for those who request it.

Recommendation A7: *Ensure confidentiality of sources for character information on candidates.* Request that candidates sign a waiver form that relinquishes their right to review letters of recommendation provided on their behalf. In the alternative, seek legislative relief from legal requirements to release information originating from individuals providing data aimed at determining a candidate's character for Service academy admissions.

Finding: The candidate essay is called the "USAF Academy Candidate Writing Sample."

Recommendation A8: *Revise the existing candidate essay requirement in both title and content. Tie at least some portion of the essay requirement into a review of a character-related reading*

or video provided by the admissions staff. Migrate to web-based performance—log on to a site and have a school official or ALO administer the essay submission.

Finding: A significant number of ALO survey respondents indicated a desire for more and better education and training for their role in assessing character.

Recommendation A9: *Enhance the ability of ALOs to assess candidates for character and suitability for performance at the Academy and service as an Air Force officer through enhanced training. Provide a "best practices" portal on the ALO web for exchange of ideas on the most effective ways to screen candidates.*

Finding: Congressional offices were universally open to receiving more guidance from USAFA and the other Service academies on ways their processes could be modified to be helpful for the academies.

Recommendation A10: *During training and orientation sessions, regularly distribute best practices used by congressional offices for candidate evaluation and nomination.*

Finding: ALOs' relationship with congressional staffs varies in frequency and quality and should be improved.

Recommendation A11: *Strengthen and increase relationships between ALOs and congressional offices, in particular the staffers responsible for managing the nomination process for Members of Congress.*

Finding: The admissions process can more effectively condition the applicants on the importance of character, what character is, and what is expected of them while at the Academy and once commissioned.

Recommendation A12: *Revise the language of the USAFA admissions process to reflect that of the ODS and of commissioning suitability with specific components for administrative, competency, and character.*

Recommendation A13: *Revise existing or create new marketing and recruiting materials to emphasize Air Force values generally and character specifically.*

Recommendation A14: *Require candidates to review a reading (or video) provided by USAFA that both introduces character traits required of an Air Force officer and sets the stage for evaluating the candidate's comment and reflection on character traits.*

Recommendation A15: *Enhance the post-admission package by designing a post-admissions orientation program that begins the process of narrowing the gap between the candidate's initial value system and that expected by USAFA. ALOs could contribute to this process by following up with the candidate following his or her receipt of this package.*

Recommendation A16: *Emphasize to Members of Congress and their staffs the value they can add to Service academy efforts to condition prospective candidates by also communicating the importance of character in their literature and handouts.*

The Officer Development System

Finding: External environmental demands placed on USAFA by the media, Congress, and graduates, combined with the significant efforts required for internal transformational change at USAFA, create the need for a Provost or Deputy Superintendent at USAFA.

Recommendation O1: *Establish and fill the position of a Provost or Deputy Superintendent, as a two-star equivalent position, to ensure integration of ODS across the mission elements.* This person needs to have a strong academic, operational, and, if possible, athletics background with proven abilities to build consensus among disparate groups. The term of service should be a minimum of five years to provide continuity of oversight during the transformation period.

Finding: USAFA recently created, and is in the process of staffing, an institutional integration office. Lack of an integration office has been an obstacle to synchronization and integration of character and leadership activities across mission elements.

Recommendation O2: *The newly created integration divisions in XP (XPL, "Leadership Development Division," and XPC, "Culture and Climate Division") must be properly resourced and given the authority to effectively integrate ODS across the Academy.*

Finding: USAFA does not have a program to routinely assess how the character and leadership abilities of its graduates are being perceived by operational units to which they are assigned.

Recommendation O3: *Partner with USAF to conduct surveys and interviews annually to assess whether or not graduates have the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform their roles as junior Air Force Officers*

Finding: USAFA has not synchronized and integrated its character and leadership programs across mission elements.

Recommendation O4: *Complete the current comprehensive review being undertaken by the mission elements to deconflict programs and activities and to identify gaps, duplications, and "no value added" programs and activities and eliminate them. Develop an integrated and coordinated 47-month character and leadership development program to produce the ten ODS outcomes across the six dimensions of cadet development.*

Finding: Organizational structure makes the dialogue across mission elements very difficult.

Recommendation O5: *Create new or expand existing forums among mission elements to facilitate cross-talk. Provide forums for grassroots up-flow of information in addition to top-down.*

Finding: Faculty need to be composed of the right individuals to sustain ODS.

Recommendation O6: *Develop a marketing program that advertises service at USAFA as an instructor or tactical staff as an important, value-adding assignment that is career enhancing. This would mean ensuring that the rotating faculty and staff are viewed and valued as a "second graduating class" that is more valuable to the operational Air Force than when they came to the Academy.*

Recommendation O7: *Review and assess the process of faculty selection, retention, and evaluation to ensure that USAF and USAFA provide the best possible role models for cadets. Rotating faculty should have current USAF operational experience, and tenured, permanent faculty should be involved in significant outreach activities and/or ongoing interaction with the operational Air Force. The Superintendent should facilitate these efforts.*

Finding: A number of staff and faculty we spoke with indicated their belief that ODS is primarily for cadets. Many of those we interviewed did not see their role in ODS as broader than their responsibility within their particular mission element.

Recommendation O8: *The definition of leadership as articulated by USAFA and the Air Force most be expanded to include the requirement that leaders be responsible for "improving organizations" and "developing subordinates."*

Finding: There is no mechanism or structure to integrate character and leadership development curriculum across mission elements or to determine whether or not the curriculum balance between science/engineering and the liberal arts is best suited to develop leaders of character.

Recommendation O9: *Articulate the key dimensions of character consistent with the ten ODS outcomes and eight character outcomes, describe them, and determine the observable behaviors associated with each dimension.*

Recommendation O10: *Continue to review and assess the effectiveness of the USAFA character development programs—VECTOR, LIFT, R&R, and ACES—to ensure that content and design align with the PITO framework. Ensure that these programs are progressive. Synchronize and integrate follow-on activities across programs to leverage the effectiveness of these programs.*

Finding: There is widespread discontent with the Honor *system*, but widespread support for the Honor *code*.

Recommendation O11: *Restore confidence in the honor system. (See the Josephson Institute Study for specific recommendations.)*

Finding: Heavy weighting of academics—the OML at USAFA is 70 percent academic performance—leads to a perception that military and physical performance are not significant components of the cadet developmental experience. This perception negates the importance of those programs, as well as any character and leadership activities that are embedded in those programs.

Recommendation O12: *Change the cadet OML to better balance emphasis among the developmental dimensions by decreasing the emphasis on academics and increasing the emphasis on an accountability for character development.*

Finding: Institutional assessment efforts do not adequately assess the effectiveness of mission element programs in developing leaders of character or the progress of cadets against the ten ODS outcomes.

Recommendation O13: *Direct the construction of a robust assessment process focused on how mission elements are adapting to ODS and to what extent programs and activities across mission elements are facilitating organization and cultural change, as well as developing cadets as measured against the ten ODS outcomes.*

Finding: Faculty, staff, and cadets, in general, are not well informed on what it means to be a leader of character and what their responsibilities are in the character and leadership development process.

Recommendation: O14: *Design and publish an ODS informational pamphlet that specifically addresses the roles and responsibilities of cadets in the character and leadership development process.*

Recommendation O15: *Institute an ODS educational process as part of the summer staff and faculty development and transition program with experienced or senior faculty as teachers and mentors to incoming staff and faculty.* Education should include specific examples of how ODS is or can be incorporated into curriculum design and classroom teaching methods.

Recommendation: O16: *Clearly state and sustain the importance of staff and faculty in the character development process at USAFA.* Periodically provide staff and faculty with in-service programs, particularly at the beginning of each academic year. Develop curriculum around the theories that form the foundation for character and leadership education and development. These programs should focus on both theory and practical application.

Recommendation O17: *Recommend that all personnel be evaluated on their understanding and implementation of ODS.* Assess staff and faculty on their evaluation reports and in their quarterly counseling against one or more criteria related to their understanding and implementation of ODS principles.

Finding: AOCs do not perceive themselves as having sufficient time to engage in the activities directed at cadet development.

Recommendation O18: *Study how the AOCs and AMTs use their time. Identify what interferes with their primary roles of developing leaders of character. Eliminate time-wasters and protect their time so that they can interact with and develop cadets.*

Recommendation O19: *The AOCs and AMTs must be the primary instructors for the PML.* These hours are precious opportunities for AOCs and AMTs to model, coach, and mentor. These responsibilities should not be delegated to Assistant AOCs, without close coordination.

Finding: There are extensive processes in place to objectively assess intellectual, physical, and professional performance. There are no objective measures available to assess the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of cadet development.

Recommendation O20: *Establish assessment criteria to evaluate cadet character development over time.*

Recommendation O21: *Design specific programs to develop the spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions of a cadet's life as part of ODS.*

Finding: AOCs perceive themselves as not receiving expected incentives for duty at USAFA.

Recommendation O22: *USAFA must partner with AETC on incentives for AOCs to ensure that expectations clearly are understood and met.*

Finding: There are fundamental differences between being an AOC in a developmental cadet squadron verses an operational squadron. We found that AOCs did not understand these differences when they were recruited and assigned as AOCs.

Recommendation O23: *Communicate clearly in the recruiting and assessment processes the tension between the AOC roles as commander and developer.*

- Communicate clearly to AOCs, during the recruiting, education, and training processes, the balance between their responsibilities as commander and developer

- Ensure that AOCs are held responsible primarily for cadet development, not primarily for squadron performance, in the performance appraisal process

Finding: The AOC is supposed to be responsible for assigning a cadet's MPA, but in practice, it is a shared responsibility.

Recommendation O24: *AOCs are the sole MPA grade assigner.* In assigning the grade, AOCs should consider inputs from faculty, coaches, cadets (360-degree), sponsors and supervisors of extra-curricular activities. End fixed percent for intercollegiate athletes and faculty.

- The Dean, in coordination with the Commandant, should determine how the faculty can provide useful input to the AOC on character and leadership development, based on observed behavior;

- The Athletic Director, in coordination with the Commandant, should determine how coaches and instructors can provide useful input to the AOC on character and leadership development, based on observed behavior.

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Finding: The Master's Degree in Counseling at the University of Colorado is an excellent educational experience for officers in preparation for their roles as AOCs. More can be done, however, in the program to prepare the officers for the AOC role.

Recommendation O25: *Shift AOC educational program from a counseling focus to a leadership and leader development focus with some counseling. Assignments for those courses should be grounded in the Cadet Wing.*

Recommendation O26: *The UCCS program must be aggressively bridged to USAFA throughout a student AOC's entire year.*

Finding: The chain of command can better set the conditions that allow cadets operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent within the boundaries set by the Commandant. Fear of failure diminishes the latitude given to AOCs and cadets to benefit from developmental activities.

Recommendation O27: *Allow the cadet chain of command operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent to accomplish missions within the boundaries or standards of acceptability set by the Commandant.* The Training Wing and AOCs must coach and mentor cadets in leadership roles. Ensure that AOCs have the latitude to underwrite the efforts of their developing cadets. We recommend that the chain of command

- Expand AOC and cadet latitude for decision making.
- Allow AOCs to administer discipline to cadets who make mistakes. Do *not* take discipline out of the hands of the AOCs, except for rare instances where jurisdiction is withheld at Group or Training Wing level.
- Allow AOCs the authority to use individual rewards and punishments to augment the Outstanding Squadron System to shape their squadron climate—no quotas.

Finding: The discipline system at USAFA, while having many positive effects, also has some liabilities that may be working against the ten desired ODS outcomes.

Recommendation O28: *Modify the cadet discipline system.*

Finding: Not all cadets are assessed in their development in leadership positions.

Recommendation O29: *Align Cadet Wing roles and responsibilities with the PITO framework and Leadership Growth Model.*

Recommendation O30: *Every cadet must be evaluated in a meaningful leadership role in sophomore, junior, and senior years, distributed across mission elements. Establish performance measures to assess development in all roles, duties, and responsibilities.*

Finding: The ten ODS outcomes are not being used as measures of success for cadets.

Recommendation O31: *Alter the forms by which cadets are assessed and evaluated to reflect the desired outcomes of the ODS and provide positive and meaningful feedback to cadets in terms of those measurable outcomes.*

Recommendation O32: *Use 360° feedback as part of the cadets' performance appraisal system. Allow subordinates to comment on the knowledge, skills, and abilities of their cadet leaders. Tailor feedback using the ten ODS outcomes to support the ratings.*

Finding: There are inadequate developmental tools that allow cadets to take ownership of their own character and leadership development.

Recommendation O33: *Implement a program requiring cadets to build ILDPs.*

Recommendation O34: *Develop a portfolio and journaling requirement for cadets to reflect on and make meaning of significant experiences during their four years at the Academy.*

Commissioning Suitability

Finding: USAF and USAFA do not have a definition or description for commissioning suitability. The current use of *aptitude for service* does not provide an adequate basis for determining commissioning suitability under ODS.

Recommendation C1: *USAF and commissioning sources must clearly describe commissioning suitability as an operational concept, including a detailed description of its components and the manner in which the components are measured and developed.* Commissioning suitability should include, at a minimum:

1. Administrative and statutory-based requirements.

2. Competency-based requirements: GPA, MPA, and PEA.

3. Character-based requirements: summary assessment of cadet behavior in the areas of spirituality, ethical behavior, and social development. This would also include assessments of cadet performance in the key character-based education programs, such as VECTOR, R&R, LIFT, and ACES.

4. The first three requirements must be appropriately connected to the officership identities (warrior spirit, leader of character, professional, and servant of the nation), the ten officer development system outcomes, Air Force values, and Air Force Development Doctrine, AFDD 1-1.

Commissioning suitability measures also need to be behaviorally anchored and based on what can be observed. USAFA, or any commissioning source, must identify and describe the behaviors associated with leaders of character and those suitable for commissioning, then provide assessments from multiple perspectives on the observed behavior. In sum, these observations serve as the basis for determination of military aptitude and commissioning suitability.

Finding: There has not been a systemic structure or process established for the Air Force and the commissioning sources to collaboratively define and describe commissioning suitability and to enforce its effective application.

Recommendation C2: *If USAFA is to be the premier institution for developing leaders of character, it should take the lead to set the standard for commissioning suitability.*

Finding: There is not a clear statement of the importance an AOC plays in assessing a cadet's suitability for commissioning.

Recommendation C3: *AOCs should hold significant weight as the evaluator of character and leadership attributes in determining commissioning suitability. At some point, USAFA has to clearly articulate where the input for commissioning suitability assessment comes from, in what format, and how often. Additionally, it may be necessary to consider a weighting system for the inputs to commissioning suitability.*

Psychological Instruments

Finding: Behavior, as described earlier, is not static. Rather, behavior is an aggregation of inherent and developed traits that are situation dependent. The complexity of measuring and predicting situationally dependent behavior is exacerbated by the recognition that no one test can accurately identify or infer "good character." Therefore, a multi-tiered approach may best serve the process of selecting, assessing, and shaping cadets progressing through the FCS.

Recommendation P1 (Admissions): *The use of psychological instruments in conjunction with the admissions process is not recommended. Assessing written essays may provide insights into the judgment and character of those seeking admission to USAFA.*

Recommendation P2 (ODS): *The use of the following instruments within the ODS framework.*

a. Baseline cadet assessment

The NEO-PI-R, the Defining Issues Test, and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test should be administered at admissions to provide faculty a baseline of personality indicators from which to implement character development strategy. (See test descriptions below)

b. Pre-commissioning assessment

The Defining Issues Test and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test should be administered 18-20 months after admissions, and as component of the assessments engaged to determine commissioning suitability.

c. Character coaching and development

The Rokeach Values Survey offers a mechanism for developing character growth. Use of this tool, by a skilled professional, should be considered a potential framework from which to guide individuals who may require direction in moral and personal growth. (See test description below)

Annex 1: Finding and Recommendations

It should be noted that the value of a personality measurement tool is both to evaluate and coach optimal behavior traits. The necessity of professional guidance in this process cannot be overstated. Instruments should be administered, interpreted and debriefed by qualified personnel only and must be part of an overall developmental program using the results to adjust the cadet's Individual Leader Development Plan.

Annex 2: Action Plan

Introduction

The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide thoughts and ideas about how to implement the recommendations made in the study. This section is *not* intended to be directive, but should be viewed as a resource of ideas and best practices the Team has found during the study. The Action Plan is organized by mission element as well as by priority: Short Term, Mid-Term and Long Term.

Terminology

Short Term—Within the next academic year at USAFA (AY 06), specifically, April 05-June 06

Mid-Term—AY 07 through AY 10

Long Term—beyond AY 10

Organization by Section

The Action Plan is organized to be useful for operators at the various levels and mission elements in the Air Force, in the following five sections:

1. The *Strategic Section* is primarily for the Secretary of the Air Force and HQ/AF level, although some actions require joint execution outside the department.

2. The *Admissions Section* is organized by the following main categories: General, Improving Character Evaluation, and Begin the "Conditioning" Process.

3. The *Officer Development System Section* is organized by

    - **Executive**: Superintendent, Provost, Superintendent's Staff (particularly XP and the Assessments Office)

    - **Commandant**: Commandant's Staff, Training Wing, Training Group, AOCs, Center for Character Development

    - **Dean:** Faculty and Staff, Center for Educational Excellence

    - **Athletic Director:** Coaches and staff

The sections are further organized by short-term, mid-term and long-term actions.

Within the mission areas, actions are grouped by topic:

- Overall

- Implementation and Integration

- Curriculum and Programs

- AOCs (if applicable)

- Cadets

4. The Commissioning Suitability Section

5. The Psychological Instruments Section

Reference to Recommendations

While the action plan generally follows the sequence of recommendations in the report, not every recommendation has an action plan associated with it. *Numbers in ( ) refer to recommendation numbers*. Where possible, we have identified institutions with "best practices" as resources for more detailed information.

Strategic-Level HQ/AF /Secretary of the Air Force Actions

Overall

Short Term

1. (S1) Establish incentives to attract Air Force personnel to seek duty at the commissioning source institutions.

   a. For AOCs in particular, favorable promotion, command opportunities, and professionally developing assignments should follow duty at USAFA, consistent with manner of performance in those duties.

   b. Investigate the impact of requesting an increase in the allocation of DP slots, and then carefully allocate those to high-performing AOCs.

   c. The personnel management process for these officers should be a focus of attention for senior personnel managers.

   d. Promotion boards should be given clear communications and instructions regarding the roles and responsibilities of AOCs at USAFA.

   e. Create the conditions, through a strategic marketing process, such that the faculty and staff at USAFA become a key source of intellectual capital and expert knowledge for the advancement of Air Force operations requirements.

Mid-Term

2. (S9) Expand the capabilities at the Air Force level to oversee operational implementation of commissioning suitability programs and processes.

   a. Establish the capability to facilitate cross-talk, share best practices, and be a resource among all of the commissioning source programs, both AFOATS and USAFA.

   b. This capability would be a bridge between the HQ/AF DP office that currently coordinates policy and standards and the field pre-commissioning source activities.

    c. The Commissioning Training and Education Committee could do this, by altering its current charter to focus on execution and results as well as curriculum and content

3. (S10. S11)) Conduct a joint venture with the other Services to develop psychological instruments to better assess character for officer candidates for admission, development, and commissioning suitability. In addition, joint venture with other Services to develop pre-commissioning programs for the spiritual, moral/ethical, and social components of officer development.

    a. Establish an interdepartmental working group resourced from the Services with a charter to produce a program and instruments within a specified period of time

    b. Establish necessary memoranda of agreement to permit collaboration and shared use of resources to conduct the necessary research and development of programs and instruments.

Long Term

4. (S2) Plan to establish a Center for Character and Leadership at USAFA.

    a. This would be the Air Force's premier center to research and educate the operational Air Force on "leader of character" development, but located at USAFA.

    b. Provide resourcing in addition to or in place of the capital campaign initiative at USAFA to establish a USAFA Leader of Character Center of Excellence. This center would be staffed to provide research, doctrine, education and training, and assessment expertise to benefit the entire Air Force.

    c. A model for this could be the Army's Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

    d. Lt Col Danny Miller, AFSLMO, has created a concept and briefing for an Air Force Leadership Institute that could fulfill this action.

Officer Development System

Short Term

5. The Chief of Staff, Air Force, should communicate with his four-star MAJCOM commanders by correspondence and as special topics at the CORONA conferences the following actions:

- (S6) Ensure support by MAJCOMs for an annual survey to determine how USAFA (and ROTC and OTS) are or are not meeting the needs of the operational Air Force. This survey should include questions related to the ten ODS outcomes and the dimensions of officership.

- (S7) Ensure HQ/AF support for the operational Air Force to provide opportunities for cadets to gain experiences in operational units, for both USAFA and ROTC. Specifically, emphasize the importance of the Academy's current expansion of Operation Air Force where three USAFA classes are getting field experience this summer.

- (S8) Endorse and support Academy efforts to expand a "returning graduate program" that brings newly commissioned officers back to the Academy to share experiences and observations in a small-group setting (similar to USMA's program). This requires MAJCOMs to release a significant number of junior officers for a short visit to the Academy and ROTC units. This will also help to link the USAFA to the operational Air Force as the Air Force's Academy.

Mid-Term

6. (S4) Review skills, knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and competencies needed in a 21st-century Air Force officer and align USAFA curriculum accordingly.

    a. AFSLMO should coordinate with USAFA and the other commissioning sources to ensure that the necessary force development requirements are being met by the majors programs and courses of study. (Note: The Dean is studying this at USAFA for the Superintendent.)

    b. Consider rebalancing engineering and humanities requirements at USAFA and a majors program based on this assessment.

7. (S5) Pre-commissioning curricula contained in the CEMU should be included in a review by the Air Force Command Board of Advisers that reviews the relevancy of PME at Air University.

    a. It may not be annual, but it should be periodic (2 to 3 years**)**.

    b. The board could also identify concepts and best practices from the commissioning sources that could benefit the PME at Air University and in the operational Air Force. For example, USAFA has developed 10 ODS outcomes to operationalize Air Force doctrine in AFDD 1-1. This could provide an operational framework for implementing AFDD 1-1 in the operational Air Force to promote common culture, language, values, and behaviors to align USAFA with the operational Air Force. This could start with PME courses at Maxwell AFB.

Commissioning Suitability

Short Term

8. (C1) The Air Force and commissioning sources must clearly describe commissioning suitability as an operational concept, with a detailed description of its components and the manner in which the components are measured and developed. A specific recommendation is contained in the Commissioning Suitability action plan.

Admissions Action Plan

General Recommendations

Short Term

1. (A1) *Define, describe, and explain the importance of character and communicate it to USAFA staff involved in the admissions process, ALOs, authors of letters of recommendation, and congressional offices and their interview panels or boards.*

    a. USAFA's expectations regarding character must be clearly defined and described in the applications and admissions process.

    b. The word *character* should be further described as what the Academy means by "character" for applicants. Emphasis for admissions should be on capacity and potential for development after admission.

    c. Provide behavioral and other examples as indicators of character as a guide in this process.

    d. Revise suggested questions for ALO and congressional panel or board interviewers based on any changes resulting from these definitions and descriptions.

2. (A2) *Increase the ongoing research and analysis capabilities of the Air Force Academy Directorate of Admissions by adding a staff of two full-time analysts.*

    a. Draft a position description to support the hiring action setting forth the exact functions of the staff.

    b. The analysts should be responsible for the following activities: monitoring national trends; long-term forecasting; assessment of admissions practices such as the use of evaluation forms, composite weightings, rolling selections, and class "shaping"; statistical analyses of candidates and classes; benchmarking against other Service academies and academic institutions; compilation of admissions process best practices from other Service academies and academic institutions; and recommending new practices to the Director of Admissions to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Mid-Term

3. (A4) *Collaborate with the other Service academies on updating the "Congressional Guide for Admission to the United States Service Academies" to significantly strengthen the discussion on the importance of character. Identify the Service academies' view of the important role congressional offices can play in assisting with the conditioning of the candidate on the character expectations of the Service academies. Identify the benefits a congressional interview panel can play in this regard.*

    a. As part of periodic updating, recommend a strong, collaborative rewrite on character emphasis.

    b. Expand the character portion significantly from a single paragraph to a section.

4. (A9) *Enhance the ability of ALOs to assess candidates for character and suitability for performance at the Academy and service as an Air Force officer through enhanced*

training. Provide a "best practices" portal on the ALO web for exchange of ideas on the most effective ways to screen candidates.

 a. Create and populate a character evaluation "best practices" portal on the ALO web.

 b. Communicate its availability and the desire for ALO input and participation to the entire ALO community.

Strengthen Character Evaluation During the Admissions Process

Short Term

5. (A5) *Empower the admissions panel with more influence in the admissions process by either revising the ALO interview form or revising the overall weight of the inputs from admissions panels (USAFA Form O-379). Reduce the content of the candidate folders reviewed by the admissions panel to focus primarily on character-related content. Ensure that a representative from the Center for Character Development serves as a member of each admissions panel. Adopt a review process similar to that of other Service Academies and the USAF ROTC scholarship boards where each panel member reviews and scores each record.*

 a. Frame the admissions review as consisting of three components: administrative, competency, and character. (This is the same frame we will use to discuss commissioning suitability.)

 b. Under this construct, the administrative requirement is the congressional nomination and physical and related requirements, and the competency-based requirements are the academic and extracurricular composites.

 c. The final stage is the Admissions Panel, which will award a character score based on a "whole person" evaluation of inputs from specific sources of character-related information.

 d. The Admissions Board at the Academy should include a representative with the background and experience necessary or sufficient to focus on the character component of each applicant, such as a representative from the Center for Character Development.

6. (A5) *Empower the Admissions Panel with more influence in the admissions process by either revising the ALO interview Form 4060 or revising the overall weight of the inputs from Admissions Panels (USAFA Form O-379). Reduce the content of the candidate folders reviewed by the Admissions Panel to focus primarily on character-related content. Ensure that a representative from the Center for Character Development serves as a member of each Admissions Panel. Adopt a review process similar to that of other Service academies and the USAF ROTC scholarship boards where each panel member reviews and scores each record.*

 a. Increase the weight given to the Admissions Panel from 20 to 30 percent, and decrease academic and extracurricular weight to 55 and 15 percent respectively. There are a couple of equally acceptable alternatives for accomplishing this. USAFA could revise the ALO form to provide only a "definitely admit," "admit," or "do not admit" recommendation with increased emphasis on written comments,

then allow the panel members to score the entire file, factoring in the ALO interview as one of the inputs, but without a specific point total allocated. The Study Team leans towards that solution. However, as an alternative, USAFA could keep the ALO form as is, but increase significantly the numerical weight of all the other facets of the Admissions Panel review to provide a meaningful role for the Admissions Panel members as part of the overall candidate evaluation.

b. We also recommend some changes in the Admissions Panel review to facilitate the panel member's review. Currently, the Admissions Panel reviews a file that includes everything in the candidate's admissions record: high school transcripts, writing samples, letters of recommendation, administrative paperwork and correspondence. Much of this content has already been summarized in the academic and extracurricular composites or is purely administrative and so adds nothing to the "people/character" assessments the Admissions Panel review is intended to provide. We recommend that USAFA restrict the selection folder to a summary of the candidate's academic and extracurricular composite scores and then provide the data and materials that directly relate to the Admissions Panel review. This is designed to mirror the Air Force method of having promotion boards review selection folders rather than entire personnel folders. The intent is to give the Admissions Panel member the opportunity to more thoroughly review those documents directly relevant to the review.

c. The Study Team also recommends that each Admissions Panel at the Academy include a representative from the Center for Character Development to ensure that each panel has an individual with the background and experience necessary to provide expertise on the character evaluation of each applicant. We also believe that USAFA should reconsider its practice of having only a single panel member review each file. Having each panel member review each file provides better opportunity for discussion, provides multiple perspectives on a given candidate, and increases the likelihood that discrepancies in scoring a particular candidate would be identified.

7. (A5) *Empower the admissions panel with more influence in the admissions process by either revising the ALO interview form or revising the overall weight of the inputs from admissions panels (USAFA Form O-379). Reduce the content of the candidate folders reviewed by the admissions panel to focus primarily on character-related content. Ensure that a representative from the Center for Character Development serves as a member of each admissions panel. Adopt a review process similar to that of other Service Academies and the USAF ROTC scholarship boards where each panel member reviews and scores each record.*

a. Build a separate "selection folder" with only data that are relevant to the USAFA Form O-379, taking into account this study's recommendations on additional character-relevant information. This is designed to allow the panel members to more thoroughly review the contents directly relevant to their task.

b. The folder should also include a summary of the administrative and competency (including the academic and extracurricular composites) facets of the admissions process.

Mid-Term

8. (A6) *Require letters of recommendation from three persons who have a relationship with the candidate and can comment on the candidate's character. This may include coaches, clergy, employers, professionals, business-persons, community leaders, educators, and former or current military officers, especially USAF. Either revise the existing USAFA Form 145, "School Official's Evaluation of Candidate," to support this requirement or eliminate it.*

   a. Develop a model or notional letter of recommendation with standard characteristics:

      i. Identifying in what capacity the author has known the candidate and for how long

      ii. Commenting on specific character traits of the candidate

      iii. Providing specific examples of how the character traits were demonstrated

   b. Develop an explanatory letter from the Superintendent or Commandant to individuals writing letters of recommendation that communicates the importance of the task, its purpose in the admissions process, guidance on the content (including a copy of the model or notional letter of recommendation) and explanation of the confidentiality or lack thereof of the letter of recommendation.

   c. Other information from references writing letters could include: length of acquaintance with candidate; identifying in what context and how often the recommender had contact with the candidate; identifying the meaning of character for USAFA and asking for comments on attributes in those identified areas as well as citing specific examples where those traits are identified.

   d. Consider sending an example letter on a hypothetical candidate as an aid in the process.

   e. Examine this Study's findings and recommendations and the USAFA Admissions Office's own data regarding the utility and impact of the current USAFA Form 145, "School Official's Evaluation of Candidate." Determine whether or not the form can be modified to support the above requirement. In the alternative, consider eliminating the form in favor of the new requirement.

9. (A7) *Ensure confidentiality of sources for character information on candidates. Request that candidates sign a waiver form that relinquishes their right to review letters of recommendation provided on their behalf. In the alternative, seek legislative relief from legal requirements to release information originating from individuals providing data aimed at determining a candidate's character for Service Academy admissions.*

   a. USAFA should develop a "highly encouraged" waiver form for the candidates to sign. It is common among colleges and universities to request waivers of access to letters of recommendation.

   b. If the development of a waiver form is insufficient, USAFA should request legislative relief to ensure that it can provide confidentiality for sources of character-related information that request it. These actions will allow persons writing letters of recommendation to be more candid in their remarks, since they will know that the contents of their letters will not be revealed to candidates, their

parents, Members of Congress that nominated candidates, or other persons outside the admissions process.

10. (A8) *Revise the existing candidate essay requirement in both title and content. Tie at least some portion of the essay requirement into a review of a character-related reading or video provided by the admissions staff. Migrate to web-based performance—log on to the site and have the school official or ALO administer the essay submission.*

   a. Identify the appropriate audience for this requirement. There are two alternatives: have each candidate provide this sample, or have only those candidates who meet a minimum threshold for competitiveness complete the form.

   b. Identify an appropriate excerpt to support the essay requirement.

   c. Develop a model answer for use in comparing essays.

   d. Evaluate and determine the best means for administering the essay—should it be computer administered or should it be a modification to the existing USAFA Form O-878 (USAF Academy Candidate Writing Sample) or kept as a separate additional requirement?

   e. A detailed procedure could be as follows:

   i. Assessing *written essays* may provide insights into the judgment and character of those wishing to enter the Air Force Academy. Because of the inherent challenges in establishing the inter-rater reliability of such written arguments, a group of leaders, both military and non-military professionals, could be empanelled to review these essays and to participate in a selection process that is well established in such venues as federal grant review.

   ii. The process might follow the one herein described: Candidates would report to a pre-determined site, be placed before a computer, and be allowed 2 hours to respond to an essay question. The question posed might be "Describe an incident in which your decision had negative consequences on others, how you brought the situation to resolution, and how your behavior was changed as a result of this experience."

   iii. Thirty to forty 2- to 4-page completed essays would be distributed to each member of the review panel and judged according to prescribed ranking factors. Discussion and consensus among the panel would take place either through teleconferencing or through five to seven regionally convened meetings. At the conclusion of each meeting, a list of potential candidates would be derived—individuals who would be invited to enter the face-to-face interview phase of the selection process.

   f. We also recommend that, as soon as technically feasible and practicable, the essay requirement migrate to a web-based performance. The essay should be administered by a school official or ALO at a designated time. The intent of this requirement is not simply to lessen the paperwork involved, but to ensure that the product of the essay represents the candidate's own thoughts.

11. (A10) *During training and orientation sessions, regularly distribute best practices used by congressional offices for candidate evaluation and nomination.*

    a. USAFA should periodically update and distribute the best practices to ALOs and Congressional offices. Encourage the adoption of the best practices by Congressional offices. In particular, reach out to and encourage adoption of the best practices by first-term Members of Congress.

    b. Best practices should relate to the establishment, operation, and management of high-quality programs that effectively evaluate and nominate candidates. USAFA should begin with the best practices identified in Annex 7. We encourage USAFA to coordinate its ongoing best-practice development and distribution with the other Service academy admissions offices.

12. (A11) *Strengthen and increase relationships between Admissions Liaison Officers and congressional offices, in particular the staffers responsible for managing the nomination process for Members of Congress.*

    a. Identify this as "best practice" in Congressional Staffer Orientation and Congressional Workshops.

    b. Revise and update the ALO Handbook to clearly identify roles, duties, and activities of Congressional Liaison Officers and ALOs with regard to Congressional office interaction.

    c. Update the "Congressional Guide" in collaboration with other Service academies to emphasize the important assistance and advisory role of liaison officers.

Long Term

13. (A3, S9) *Evaluate and clearly identify what type of cadets USAFA seeks.*

    a. Conduct a longitudinal study of factors that are common in successful Air Force officers.

    b. Conduct a longitudinal study of factors that are common in successful USAFA cadets.

    c. Use the results of these studies as factors to consider in future recruiting efforts for the various commissioning sources.

14. (A9) *Enhance the ability of ALOs to assess candidates for character and suitability for performance at the Academy and service as an Air Force officer through enhanced training. Provide a best-practices portal on the ALO web for exchange of ideas on the most effective ways to screen candidates.*

    a. Create a new ALO duty structure that enables designated ALOs with expertise and specialized training in leadership and character development to interview candidates to evaluate their character and officer potential. For the ALOs selected for these roles, provide training and expertise in techniques of interviewing and character assessment to generate fully qualified ALOs.

    b. Expand the ALO National Training Program by preparing training materials for ALOs that provide state-of-the-art guidelines, definitions, tools, and information from national experts on character. Update the ALO Handbook to reflect more emphasis on character.

c. Expand the ALO National Training Program by providing ALOs with formal, professional training sessions administered by experts on character. The sessions should focus on character by addressing Academy expectations, interview techniques, questions to ask, assessment techniques, standardization of evaluations, and other dimensions aimed at improving the quality of ALO assessment of character of candidates.

d. Prepare training material for ALOs that teach the critical incident interview and behavioral event interview formats. These interview formats may enhance the quality of answers and, hence, enable better ALO assessment of character of candidates.

Begin the Conditioning Process

15. (A12) *Revise the language of the USAFA admissions process to reflect that of the ODS and of commissioning suitability with specific components for administrative, competency and character.*

Under this construct, the administrative requirement is the Congressional nomination and physical and related requirements. The competency-based requirements are the academic and extracurricular composites, and the final stage is the Admissions Panel that will award a character/suitability score based on a "whole person" evaluation of inputs from specific sources of character-related information.

16. (A13) *Revise existing or create new marketing and recruiting materials to emphasize Air Force values generally and character specifically.*

a. Revise existing marketing materials and create new marketing and recruiting materials that emphasize character traits, Air Force identity, and commitment to service. Make them inspirational and aspirational versus Honor Code and disciplinarian. Place special emphasis on describing the responsibilities and demands of the expeditionary combat Air Force. Include testimonials from Air Force veterans as well as recent graduates with experience in the combat Air Force in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

b. Design one brochure and DVD that uniquely focus on the character required of an Air Force officer. (*Note:* Similar processes are being developed by USMA, through the OEMA office.)

17. (A14) *Require candidates to review a reading (or video) provided by USAFA that both introduces character traits required of an Air Force officer and sets the stage for evaluation of the candidate's comment and reflection on character traits.*

USAFA should provide the candidate with a video or excerpts from the Air Force Chief of Staff reading list, such as a passage from Brig Gen Robinson Risner's book, *The Passing of the Night: My Seven Years as a Prisoner of the North Vietnamese.* The video or reading excerpt should be designed to emphasize Air Force core values and character. This requirement is aimed at getting candidates to reflect on issues related to character traits, integrity, Air Force core values, and officership and serves as an initial way to condition those candidates who will become cadets and officers to the essential

requirement and expectation to possess these values. Explain up front the requirement to review and reflect on this material as a means to develop as a leader of character.

18. (A15) *Enhance the post-admission package by designing a post-admissions orientation program that begins the process of narrowing the gap between the candidate's initial value system and that expected by USAFA. ALOs could contribute to this process by following up with the candidate after receipt of this package.*

For those offered admission, provide material to be read before their arrival at the Academy, introducing cadets to "what right looks like."

    a. Example material might be similar to that used by USMA, which sends out a copy of a Len Marella book, *In Search of Ethics*.

    b. Examine using ALOs to further assist in this preconditioning process prior to cadets' actual entry into the Academy.

Mid-Term

19. (A16) *Emphasize to Members of Congress and their staffs the value they can add to Service academy efforts to condition prospective candidates by also communicating the importance of character in their literature and handouts.*

    a. Draft a letter that emphasizes the important role congressional offices can play in assisting USAFA in making character judgments.

    b. Clarify the role of ALOs and Admissions Office staff in assisting congressional offices.

    c. Provide examples of best practices of congressional offices.

    d. Underscore the usefulness of the *Congressional Guide* and note an update that emphasizes character in the congressional nomination process.

    e. Consider adding a portal to the USAFA admissions website to identify congressional best practices.

    f. Explain the assignment and role of ALOs within or near congressional districts and the benefits of their activities to congressional offices.

Officer Development System Action Plan

Executive (Superintendent, Provost, Superintendent's Staff/XP/Assessments Office)

Short Term

Overall

1. Establish the position of Provost or Deputy Superintendent.

    a. Fill this position with a two-star equivalent person with experience in the operational Air Force and academia and with, if possible, a sports or athletic background. Credentials should include experience at the operational level coordinating large complex organizations and adeptness at building consensus.

b.. The incumbent needs to work across all mission elements but with the authority over the Commandant and Dean and AD to make integrative decisions when necessary.

c.. This position should provide continuity in Academy operations and require that the incumbent be in the position for a minimum of 5 years.

Integration Office

2. The newly created Integration Divisions in XP (XPL, "Leadership Development Division," and XPC, "Culture and Climate Division") need to be properly resourced and given the authority to be effective at integrating ODS across the Academy.

   a. Accelerate the staffing of these divisions to begin the sizeable task of integration. Staffing needs to be complete by July in order to use the next AY for planning and implementing integration efforts and application of the recommendations emerging from this Study.

   b. These divisions should report directly to the Superintendent and Provost, not be subordinate to the staff. The best solution would be a small strategic integration division, similar to OPA at West Point, that can serve as a think tank and not be directed by, or subordinated to, another staff agency. This division needs to receive its mission guidance directly from the Superintendent.

   c. Leaders of these divisions should be O6's or equivalent in order to have the authority to direct action on behalf of the Superintendent and/or Provost.

   d. Personnel need to be assigned full-time and not be dual-hatted.

   e. Staffing should be stabilized for two years to provide the continuity of sustained effort needed to create culture change at the Academy. It may be necessary to temporarily fill positions with available personnel while actively recruiting those with the necessary background, rank, and experience to undertake this critical endeavor.

3. Ensure that the Research and Assessment Division in the XP is constructing an assessment program and processes to provide meaningful insights and feedback on the ODS implementation and integration.

   a. Assess both individual development within ODS and the effectiveness of ODS programs

   b. Integrate the assessment activities occurring within each mission element's internal assessments division

   c. Develop appropriate indicators of success to measure progress

Assess the Effectiveness of Pre-Commissioning Programs

4. Assess the relevancy of pre-commissioning programs to the operational Air Force

   a. Conduct annual surveys of graduates and supervisors of graduates to assess how well programs are meeting the needs of the field. West Point has an excellent program and database for doing this. AFROTC has also been doing this.

b. Conduct interviews at the senior Service college of those who have recently supervised graduates of the various commissioning programs. West Point sends a team to Carlisle to conduct these interviews each year. USAFA should interview AFSC and SOS students as well as SSC students for their opinions about the pre-commissioning programs.

Marketing to Attract Service at USAFA

5. Sustain a marketing process to promote service at USAFA as a member of the faculty or tactical staff as an important, valued-adding assignment that is career enhancing.

a. The marketing plan would have two axes of advance—one targeted external to the Air Force and the other internal to the cadets—and encourage them to be willing to consider a return to serve on the faculty to give back to others all that has been given to them.

i. The marketing plan would be presented to ROTC program students and OTS candidates, describing the potential to serve at USAFA during their career. ROTC graduates would be encouraged to initiate a file early to a particular academic department.

ii. Academic departments would track some of their best students and encourage them to begin a prospective instructor file for future consideration to serve at USAFA. Departments would track these students as officers in the Air Force, maintaining regular communication and keeping their files up to date with recommendations, test scores (GRE, GMAT), and officer performance evaluations.

b. Build a communication plan to promote the importance of USAFA permanent and rotating faculty to the development of cadets and to the support of the Air Force. This plan would include emphasizing the quality of the graduating class and the contributions of the faculty to the Air Force, not only to the education and mentorship of cadets, but through outreach efforts to the Air Force.

c. Emphasize the rotating faculty's departure each year as a "second graduating class." The officers who leave USAFA after a graduate experience and 2 to 3 years teaching assignment are better officers who have mastered a significant body of knowledge, have developed teaching, coaching and mentoring skills, and have developed an expertise in leadership and leader development that will better prepare them to serve as senior leaders in the operational Air Force.

d. Advertise throughout the Air Force the importance of the senior and rotating faculty at USAFA.

Promote Cross-Talk Within the Academy

6. Provide forums among mission elements to facilitate cross-talk and inter-mission elements as well as intra-mission dialogue. Provide forums for grassroots up-flow of information instead of top-down.

a. Expand existing mission-element forums to include members of the other mission elements to facilitate dialogue and cross-talk across mission elements. These are not briefings, but they could occur after information presentations.

b. Ideas could be captured by a facilitator and fed into the appropriate channels for action or response. Follow up on what comes out of these sessions and provide feedback on what happened to any good ideas that emerged.

c. Another effective way to do this would be to establish habitual relationships between academic departments and AOCs, the Training Wing, and coaches.

d. Cadets should be included in some of these sessions as well as have their own sessions that mirror those of the other groups.

e. Establish a method to share best practices within and across divisions, departments, and mission elements. This could be done electronically (via a bulletin board), but probably would best be done in face-to-face forums. Consider building an internal network as a community of practice (web-based) in which best practices are shared and questions can be asked and answered.

Implementation and Integration

Integrate the 47-Month Experience

7. Integrate the 47-month experience at USAFA across the mission elements.

a. Within the current four-phased strategic planning process, the XP Integration Divisions (XPL and XPC) should perform the following functions:

i. Define and describe the character behaviors and outcomes for the spiritual, ethical, and social components for each of the ten ODS outcomes.

ii. Assist the mission element review by identifying how the outcomes can be included in mission element programs.

iii. Look across mission elements to identify gaps, overlaps, and complementary areas where mission elements can partner to gain efficiencies or create synergy.

iv. A key role in the process is to look at the boundaries between mission elements and the seams of the review process and ensure that the character components are properly developed and integrated.

v. Consider producing an "ODS for Cadets" booklet to explain ODS concepts in terms cadets can understand. (Note: USMA recently published a West Point version of its Cadet Leadership Development System, culminating a 3-year effort.)

Curriculum and Programs

Align ODS with needs of Operational Air Force

8. The USAFA must ensure that the ODS program and outcome goals are directly aligned and consistent with the needs of the operational Air Force. The Superintendent's strategic planning process, in association with the key program directors, should take stock of Air Force emerging strategic visions and operational needs, connect to required

officer knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies, and be reflected in academic courses and programs.

    a. Compare current academic program goals with Air Force requirements for leadership and managerial knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies for the future Air Force operational context.

    b. USMA established a Cultural Awareness goal in the academic program in response to emerging, global operational demands. This goal had significant impact on the modification of curriculum to ensure an increase in cadet cultural awareness and contribute in some substantive manner to the social domain.

Mid-Term

Overall

9. Attract research initiatives in Leader and Character Development

Pursue research initiatives of direct value to the Air Force. Create the conditions such that the faculty and staff at USAFA become a key source of intellectual capital and expert knowledge for the advancement of Air Force operational requirements.

    a. Implementation and integration

Implementation and Integration

10. Review OML composition

Determine a more meaningful OML weight for the MPA.

    a. The weight of this grade should be increased in relationship to the GPA. The weighting and the OML should reflect USAFA's commitment to the ten ODS outcomes.

    b. Consider changing the academic, military, and physical weighting in the overall OML (to 55 percent, 35 percent, and 10 percent, respectively). Without this initiative, the Professional Development Portfolio and the Individual Leader Development Plan lose their impact on the cadets' involvement in their own development.

    c. Establish a character-specific portion of the OML. This specific component would assess a cadet's performance in any evaluated character class or program. It should also be a subjective composite assigned by the AOC with input from all sources who currently provide MPA input. Standards and behavioral anchored ratings would be developed by the Center for Character Development and Institutional Assessments office—see the Commandant's Development Program, (b)(1).

Long Term

Overall

11. Establish a Center for Character and Leadership

    a. The Air Force should establish a Center for Character and Leadership similar to the other Centers of Excellence that exist at USAFA.

b. This would be the Air Force's premier center to research and educate the operational Air Force on leader of character development, but located at USAFA.

c. Provide resourcing in addition to or in place of the capital campaign initiative at USAFA to establish a Center for Character and Leadership . This center would be staffed to provide research, doctrine, education and training, and assessment expertise to benefit the entire Air Force.

d. A model for this could be the Army's Center for Army Leadership at Fort Leavenworth, KS.

e. Lt Col Danny Miller, AFSLMO, has created a concept and briefing for an Air Force Leadership Institute that could fulfill this action.

Commandant/Commandant's Staff/Training Wing/Training Group/Center for Character Development

Short Term

Implementation and Integration

Revise the Cadet Evaluation Form

1. Revise the Cadet Evaluation Form

    a. Change the cadet evaluation and counseling forms to reflect the work that emerges from Dr. Brewster's review of the Professional Military Program regarding the ten ODS outcomes.

    b. Once the outcomes and behaviors are determined in "tactical" terms, revise the Cadet Evaluation Form. The only measures of success should be the components and building blocks of the ten ODS outcomes, as reflected in these updated Cadet Evaluation Forms. (The U.S. Coast Guard Academy and USMA have good example forms to follow.)

    c. Ensure that every desired outcome, by class, is mapped to the ten desired outcomes of ODS and that they are measured by the newly formed Cadet Evaluation Form.

Clarify Cadet Duty Positions

2. Clarify cadet duty positions

    a. Duty positions

        i. Carefully review the organization and structure of each cadet squadron.

        ii. Ensure that each cadet duty position in each squadron is truly relevant as a means for effective leadership development. These duties should be directed toward optimizing the cadet's professional development within ODS. Reorganize and redefine positions, as needed.

        iii. Every cadet activity should be associated with the ODS and should be observed and evaluated against the Cadet Evaluation Report. Include such things as trip sections, company activities, on- and off-post sponsors, intramurals, drill and

ceremony, accountability and lunch formations, room standards, and grading for applicability and accountability within the ODS outcome measures.

3. Professional Development Portfolio (PDP)

   a. Create the process for each cadet to have a PDP. This development portfolio will be the centerpiece of monitoring cadet development movement in ODS, create the conditions for cadet ownership and transformation, and serve as the repository of information that will be used to judge cadet suitability for commissioning.

      i. In the PDP will be the documents that chronicle the cadet's development throughout his or her career at USAFA. This portfolio should include developmental goals, personal reflections on key experiences, coaching and mentoring counseling records, academic work products that are linked to ODS (for example, a leadership philosophy paper that would be a work product in the leadership course, but be added to the plan/portfolio), etc. All these elements and the associated products in the plan portfolio would be connected to the theme of building a leader of character and, in conjunction with APS, MPS, and PPS would be the heart of the ultimate determination of commissioning suitability.

      ii. Coordinate with the Information Technology office to create an electronic cadet portfolio process designed to create a living document that tracks the cadets' development as leaders of character over the 47-month experience. This "electronic" instrument serves as a means to assist the AOC in helping the cadets in their development journey and contribute to a broader recommendation on creating a cadet leader development plan or road map.

      iii. USMA has been working on implementing a portfolio process and could serve as an appropriate benchmark for this initiative.

      iv. The key to the success of the PDP is to create the conditions such that the PDP becomes embedded as a natural outcome of movement in ODS. Input into the PDP can be products that are produced in other experiences (academic, military, and physical programs) but also have a purpose in the PDP. For example, an essay written in the philosophy course to test writing and thinking could use cadet experiences as topics for writing, framed in a way that it becomes a reflection appropriate for inclusion in the PDP and is directly related to leadership and character development.

4. Individual Leader Development Plan

   a. For each cadet, each semester, there should be an ILDP.

      i. This plan is a contract between the cadet and his or her AOC that is a carefully tailored subset of the ODS for that cadet in that semester's position.

      ii. Both the AOC and the cadet's direct cadet supervisor should actively participate together on the assessment of the cadet's execution against that ILDP.

      iii. This ILDP should reflect the cadet's personal insights and desires toward objective and subjective goals for that year's development in the context of the ODS.

      iv. Each cadet should have goals and objectives for each of the six domains of development (Intellectual, Physical, Professional, Social, Ethical, Spiritual), and the crafting of the ILDP should be carefully influenced by the AOC and contain the AOC's developmental challenges for each cadet.

      v. The AOC, the cadet's direct supervisor, and the cadet should review progress against that ILDP every 60 to 90 days. Time should be formally fenced on the daily schedule for these counseling and feedback sessions— that is, consider using Commandant's Hour for such ILDP activities.

      vi. This ILDP should be kept in the PDP, which will follow the cadet throughout his or her entire cadet career.

5. Reflective journaling: The cadet experience should contain carefully timed requirements for thoughtful reflection regarding leadership and character, consistent with the ODS outcomes.

    a. These are not simply private diary pieces, but disciplined essays that assist the cadet in both personal reflection and thoughtful and qualitative composition.

    b.. The reflection pieces should accompany particularly challenging events and experiences in the cadet's career.

    c.. The reflection pieces should also be in concert with written requirements in the cadet's writing and English studies.

Curriculum and Programs

Character Development Programs

6. Review the Character development programs and the Honor Code. Character development programs (VECTOR, R&R, LIFT, and ACES) are too iterative and not well integrated with the cadet's ongoing professional development.

  a. Use each of these courses to provide an opportunity for a reflective piece

  b. The Center for Character Development should

    i. Build an educational program on character for the faculty and staff so that all those involved in the development of cadets understand what character is and how it is observed and assessed.

    ii. Select, develop, and validate a selection of behavioral anchored character assessment tools for common use to provide information to the cadets and AOCs, as the integrators of leader development within ODS.

    iii. Evaluate cadets against learning outcomes in the character education process.

      (1) The development of character should be an accountable activity for cadets. This could be done with a pre-test or some other quick assessment at the start of each program.

      (2) Then, USAFA should evaluate the cadet's demonstration of mastery of the material presented in each program, by reflective journaling, a test at the

end of the session, or essays done within the normal academic curriculum by one of the academic departments.

(3) Cadets demonstrate the ability to integrate the learning from the character development programs with other developmental opportunities in their ILDP. Character would be one of the areas addressed in the ILDP and would be periodically reviewed by the cadet's rater and senior rater.

Integrate PML Across the Mission Elements

7. Integrate PML across the mission elements, with redundancies and conflicts minimized to the greatest extent possible, unless the redundancy is intentional.

   a. Determine how best to attain PML outcomes following Dr. Brewster's review, previously mentioned. The educational components of PML may be incorporated into the existing academic curriculum, and the training components could be taught during Commandant's Hour.

   b. Use only staff and faculty who have been certified to teach the PML lessons with appropriate background and experience. Sharply reduce reliance on associate AOCs, except for those qualified to teach specific PML lessons.

   c. Partner with the Dean and AD to develop the cadet's ability to observe, provide feedback, and counsel. Cadet capabilities in these areas are considered very weak, and these are critical to development in the Leadership Growth Model.

   d. Consider the benefits of establishing a professional cadre to conduct PML, such as West Point does with its Department of Military Instruction. The goal is consistency of education and training and developmental experiences across the cadet wing. The PML should have the same pedagogical focus and energy as does the academic program.

8. Operation Air Force program is already being planned for three classes, as a means to construct key developmental experiences tied to the operational Air Force. To be successful, the program should include

   a. Specific learning objectives established for each class that are consistent with the PITO and Leadership Growth models.

   b. Personal objectives established by the cadets to accomplish as a result of their Operation Air Force experience. These would be part of the ILDP and consistent with their developmental requirements.

   c. Gaining units' assignment of coaches and mentors to implement the program objectives and resourcing of the cadets to execute their developmental plans. USAFA should consider stationing liaison officers at each installation to oversee the program. ALO could be used in this effort.

   d. Assessment of cadets on their performance in these operational experiences consistent with ODS frameworks.

   e. Upon return to the Academy, USAFA-organized feedback sessions for cadets to share what they learned with each other and with their supervisors. The use of

reflective journaling throughout this process would be a natural expectation and consistent with the requirements of ILDP.

9. Improve Commandant's Challenge

   a. Consider changing the emphasis of Commandant's Challenge from squadron results to focusing on the developmental experience of preparing for the event.

   b. Use organic organization leaders and teams (rather than ad hoc "all star" teams) for assigned tasks.

   c. Observe and provide feedback using Associate AOCs and others during the train-up for the event.

   d. Public commendation for excellence could focus on development: for example, overcoming adversity, selfless service, or other character attributes.

AOCs

10. Group AOCs.

    a. Select to their roles based not only on their operational experience, but on an educational background that enhances their ability to structure developmental programs.

    b. Over time, the AOC experienced pool in the active Air Force will allow for these USAFA experienced leader developers to be eligible for follow-on assignment as group AOCs or Cadet Training Wing Commander.

    c. Group AOCs should attend the UCCS program (and TRW Cdr if possible) to understand the developmental aspects of leadership. Alternatively, a transition program should be developed so that the Group AOCs clearly understand the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies of the AOCs and better understand how to effectively use their talent in the execution of ODS.

    d. Group AOCs should begin building a relationship with AOCs during their educational experience by visiting classes, particularly the "bridging" classes taught by the USAFA.

11. Selection and rewards

    a. The Air Force needs to partner with the Academy to ensure that the selection, development, and promotion of AOCs is carefully monitored.

    b. USAFA needs to work closely with the Air Force personnel office to ensure the recruiting from and reintegration of officers back into the Air Force.

AOC Duties and Role Clarity

12. AOC duties and role clarity

    a. Clearly articulate the role of the AOC in ODS and the character development process. AOCs should be the *center of gravity* for the collection and assessment of all information on cadet behavior as it relates to leader development and commissioning suitability.

b. The role of the AMT should also be reviewed in light of the evolution of ODS. AOCs should build a solid partnership with AMTs in their squadron such that leader development responsibilities are well understood and shared in a manner consistent with the requirements of ODS.

c. Clearly articulate the duties and responsibilities of the AOCs, with a focus on their roles as leader developers and leader development integrators of the cadets.

d. These duties and responsibilities must clearly balance the requirements of leader development and commanding and ensure that the AOCs are creating the conditions in which the cadets are actually leading, allowed to make mistakes in the process of leading, and not being over-controlled by the AOCs in terms of achieving squadron performance.

e. Performance appraisals must be modified to assess AOC performance based primarily on developing individual cadets rather than on unit performance.

AOC as Leader of Character and MPA Grade Integrator

13. The AOC should be the sole MPA grade assigner.

   a. Inputs from the faculty, coaches, cadets (360), sponsors, and extracurricular activities should be considered in the determination of the MPA.

   b. The fixed percentage in the MPA for intercollegiate athletes should be dropped.

   c. The manner in which the MPA grade is determined should be changed by increasing the responsibility of the AOC to determine cadet development grades. The process by which faculty, coaches, cadets, sponsors, etc., provide input to the AOC should be refined consistent with ODS changes. This input should be based on a common framework that reports on observed behaviors that are directly related to key aspects of ODS, particularly around the notion of character.

   d. A standard process by which the AOCs integrate information from many sources to determine the military grade should be developed. This process should also include a "calibrate" procedure so that the AOCs are determining the MPA in a consistent fashion to ensure a measure of fairness and equity in cadet grading.

14. AOC time

   a. Study how the AOCs and AMTs use their time, and determine any sources of inefficiency and eliminate them.

   b. Review all administrative requirements placed on AOCs and remove those that do not contribute directly to leader development, or that could be done more efficiently and effectively by another agency.

   c. Reduce bureaucratic operations and reorganize requirements to give the AOCs more time with cadets. Reduce or consolidate the administrative duties of the AOCs that take time away from their focus on cadet leadership and character development.

   d. Require use of the chain of command for taskings and demands on the AOCs' time, so that organizations do not directly contact the AOC for matters that would go through the chain of command in the operational Air Force.

    e. Build an IT architecture that allows AOCs easy access to all information on cadets through one integrative system. This architecture should allow all mission elements to provide feedback on cadet behavior to the AOCs, contributing, in a meaningful way, to assessments on cadet leadership and character development.

Improve AOC Capability to allow cadets operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing, executing the Commander's Intent within the boundaries set by the Commandant.

15. Developing cadets to improve their operational autonomy in the Cadet Wing.

The AOCs must be given significant latitude in the use of these rewards and punishments, consistent with their assessment of development needs. Group AOCs should provide over-watch and guidance, but a "one size fits all" mentality in terms of the allocation of rewards and punishment for behavior is not appropriate. Careful consideration should be made to avoid the use of quotas for determination of rewards and punishments as the motivators of cadet development.

    a. AOCs, rather than the Scheduling Board, should have ultimate pass-granting authority

    b. Review and increase the AOC's range of rewards and punishments to be consistent, to the degree possible, with that of operational Air Force Squadron Commanders

Cadets

16. Cadet responsibility to "run the Wing"

    a. Use the Leadership Growth Model to guide relationships and interactions between cadets and staff and faculty.

        i. Cadets have an active role in influencing policy, consequences (rewards and punishments) that they have to live with.

        ii. Staff and faculty can better model ODS by giving cadets Commander's Intent and Mission type statements (or specific problems to be addressed: the "What"). The cadets have the responsibility to develop the "How, Why and Who" proposals to implement and execute a plan or program or response to a problem. AOCs and other leaders should provide oversight but allow the cadets the latitude and freedom for execution.

        iii. AOCs and TRW guide and mentor, but cadets are the first line of action with subordinates.

        iv. Communication between officers and cadets is vital. Feedback and reflection must be deliberately and consistently modeled and reinforced. Ensure that there is a response mechanism to cadet suggestions.

        v. Educate staff and faculty on procedures to reinforce ODS. As an example, the faculty should use the cadet chain of command to address problems with a cadet's attitude or performance, rather than just notifying the AOC.

Cadet Time

17. Improve management of cadet time.

    a. Conduct a cadet time study as has been done in the past.

     b. Determine how cadets are using their time to manage the demands placed on them.

     c. In view of the ten ODS outcomes, determine any adjustments that must be made on demands by the institution.

     d. Pay particular attention to time available for reflection and other developmental activities.

Mid-Term

Curriculum and Programs

Recent Graduates Program

18. Establish a Recent Graduate Program to bring back USAFA graduates and graduates of other commissioning sources with recent operational experience to meet with small groups of USAFA cadets. This event should not be a "large auditorium" event, but have many officers who can meet with small groups of cadets. The USMA has an active program to invigorate cadets with this experience.

Character Program: Spiritual, Ethical, Social

19. Design a specific program for cadet spiritual, ethical, and social development that would then be integrated with existing programs at USAFA. The XPL should lead a team from across mission elements, including chaplains, to develop this program.

     a. As an example for the spiritual program, define the concept of spirituality at USAFA. The representative ODS outcome is "… appreciate the significance of their own spiritual development, accept the beliefs of others and foster mutual respect and dignity among all individuals."

     b. Spiritual development must focus on two aspects to mirror ODS: First, individual spiritual development. Second, understanding and tolerance for the spiritual aspect of others. A possible approach would be to follow the PITO model.

     c. Review the curriculum to see how spirituality is integrated into the academic curriculum. There should be a core course on comparative religions, how religion affects politics and science, and how cultural clashes affect the use of the military element of power.

Incentives for Character Excellence

20. Create tangible awards for excellence in the character development program. As an example, the Naval Academy conducts a writing essay competition required for all cadets within each class. The writers of the best essays are rewarded at a banquet at the end of a symposium in which character is the focal topic, with guest speakers and seminars. This could easily be sponsored by the Center for Character Development using Association of Graduates money and could be co-sponsored by one of the Academic Departments, such as Philosophy or English. The best essays could be compiled into a booklet for publication.

The 360-Degree Feedback Program

21. *Cadet assessment should include 360-degree feedback for the upper three classes*. The commandant should ensure that 360-degree feedback is added to the ODS assessment process to ensure that cadets are given the opportunity to better understand what their peers and their subordinates (where appropriate) think of their professional development in ODS. This 360-degree feedback will be an invaluable asset to each cadet's reflective practice throughout the 4-year experience as a cadet. Effective use of the 360 feedback mechanisms can contribute to the cadet's growth across the six dimensions.

Leadership Remediation Resources

22. Provide resources for leadership remediation.

    a. In addition to the AOC and the limited spaces in the LEAD program in DFBL, there are no resource available to all cadets to develop their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities in a coaching manner.

    b. Look at USMA's Center for Enhanced Performance as an example of a method to provide resources to cadets who volunteer or are referred to improve their leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Improve Sponsor Role in ODS

23. Ensure that all sponsorship activities are well versed in ODS, the PDP, and the ILDP. The PDP should contain input from each cadet's sponsor, each semester. The sponsor provides an invaluable insight into the social dimension of a cadet.

    a. The sponsor should be encouraged or required each semester to provide an assessment, which would be kept in the cadet's PDP.

    b. Sponsors can still be safe havens for cadets, but professionalism is 24 hours a day, and being assessed by a sponsor should reinforce the ubiquitous nature of professional military service.

AOCs

AOC Education and Preparation for Duties

24. Education and preparation for duties

    a. Shift the AOC educational program from a counseling focus to leadership and leader development focus with some counseling. Create a program that is more in line with AOCs' primary roles as leader developers.

    b. As the duties, roles, and responsibilities of the AOCs are revised, an assessment should be made to ensure that the UCCS educational program is preparing the AOCs to execute these role requirements.

    c. Implement a long-term assessment program to determine the benefit of the current degree program and its impact in facilitating the AOCs' ability to execute their duties and responsibilities beyond what they bring into this job from their operational Air Force experience. If the UCCS program does not meet these requirements and the curriculum structure and capability do not allow for change,

the USAFA should shop for another educational program more in line with the need.

d. Coordinate with the Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership, the supervising department for the USMA's Tactical Officer Education Program for information on this process. USMA recently shifted its program from a partnership with Long Island University to a partnership with Columbia University.

e. Build a set of courses taught by members of the USAFA faculty that connect the university educational experience to the context in which the knowledge, skills, and abilities will be applied. OCs will be leader developers. These courses should use educational work products that are directly related to activities that will perform as AOCs. AOCs should be encouraged to do projects, studies, etc., in the course of the UCCS educational experience that bring them into contact with cadets and ODS. These action-learning activities, in the context of real work issues, are one of the hallmarks of the programs in business and industry that are promoted as best practices.

Improving AOC Time With Cadets

25. Consider stabilizing AOCs in their roles for three years through working with the HQ/AF

a. Stabilize the AOCs so that they really learn their jobs as leader developers and provide a *stable relationship* for the cadets with a specific AOC. The power of coaching and mentoring of cadets grows out of the development of trust. This takes time.

b. Coordinate with HQ/AF on the impact of extending tours of duty for AOCs beyond the current three-year package (one year in school, and two years as AOC) to achieve a more effective balance in the needs of the cadets and the needs of the operational Air Force. If this would result in a significant decline in attracting those with operational experience, this option could still be implemented for selected AFSCs.

c. As an alternative to stabilizing AOCs, consider increasing the number of cadet squadrons to achieve a more favorable AOC-to-cadet ratio.

Cadets

26. Modify the punishment system.

a. The training and socialization aspects of transitioning from civilian through cadet to officer needs to have a progressive punishment system. Don't use UCMJ (LOC, LOA, LOR) for minor infractions—use it for crimes. The USAF disciplinary system is inappropriate for every aspect of cadet life, as there are no operational Air Force infractions like "failure to empty trash can." This should not be handled by a letter of counseling.

b. For cadet-peculiar infractions, use a demerit-like and loss-of-privileges system. Some infractions are not developmental and are simply open-and-shut cases of a violation of standards (failure to get a haircut, room unprepared for inspection, etc.).

c. The decision to eliminate walking punishment tours should be reviewed. If time is the most precious commodity for cadets, then walking tours, which deprive cadets of time and freedom, can be effective disciplinary tools.

d. Use UCMJ (LOC/LOR/LOA, Art. 15, etc.) for serious and repeat offenses that have an analog in the operational Air Force.

e. Give AOCs UCMJ authority, equivalent to the authority of Air Force commanders in the field. The current system of "only the Com can give an Art. 15" sends the wrong message and is not the way operational Air Force works. The Group AOCs and Commandant can always reserve jurisdiction for certain offenses (alcohol, sexual misconduct, etc.).

f. Cadet discipline records should not follow the cadet to the operational Air Force. The effects of punishments following into the operational Air Force is to foster a reluctance to report or correct someone for offenses with long-term service implications. Additionally, it stifles the power of the Academy experience as a learning laboratory, when experimentation and risk taking in leadership should be encouraged to stretch the cadets' capabilities. There are enough mechanisms at the Academy to provide severe sanctions (including conduct and performance probation) without stigmatizing a cadet commissioned on active duty.

Dean/Faculty/Center for Educational Excellence

Short Term

Implementation and Integration

Faculty Selection and Assignment

1. Review the current policies and procedures regarding faculty selection and assignments and promotion at the Academy.

    a. Review and assess the process of faculty selection, retention, and evaluation to ensure that the Air Force and the USAFA provide the best possible role models for cadets. The Dean needs to work closely with the personnel office to ensure that the Air Force is assigning the right officers to the faculty with the requisite operational experience and educational preparation. An assignment to the Air Force Academy as a faculty member should be considered a professionally enhancing and challenging assignment, not a vacation.

    b. Rotating faculty should have current Air Force operational experience; tenured, permanent faculty should be involved in significant outreach activities to the operational Air Force to maintain their currency in Air Force operations consistent with their academic discipline.

    c. This effort should be conducted within a larger marketing effort by the Superintendent.

    d. USAFA needs to continue to assess whether or not its faculty recruitment, selection, education, and rotational policies are the most effective within the context of the requirements of ODS. USAFA needs to influence, through a

strategic marketing initiative, the type of officers it gets from the Air Force to serve on the academic faculty to ensure that the quality of these individuals represents the need for the education and mentoring of cadets based on emerging Air Force Force Development Doctrine and ODS outcome requirements.

e. The faculty recruitment, selection, education, and rotational policy used at the Military Academy would serve as a relevant benchmark for this process. The Army invests a significant number of its top officers, and a large percentage of its educational budget (75 percent), to supporting the USMA and its mission of developing leaders of character.

Faculty Responsibilities in ODS

2. Faculty development

a. Every faculty member should be issued and be required to read the ODS document.

b. Faculty members should be required to include the integration of ODS as part of their annual goal-setting and performance appraisal process.

c. The faculty should be assessed on their evaluation reports and in their quarterly counseling against one or more criteria related to their participation in the integration and demonstration of ODS principles.

(1) Include at least one performance objective for each staff and faculty member committing them to implement ODS as part of their job. Objective(s) would tie in to the intended ODS outcomes and include some method to assess to what degree that objective is being accomplished.

(2) Public recognition and rewards for improving the institution and furthering ODS should be considered as an incentive at the staff and faculty level.

d. Include ODS implementation in the feedback forms cadets provide on their instructors as well as for the staff and AOCs. Leaders and Supervisors should provide the resources (especially time) to enable staff and faculty to accomplish the agreed-upon objectives.

e. The rigor of the initial and ongoing faculty development should be increased to infuse the development with the over-arching frameworks of ODS and the purpose of the institution.

f. Faculty Development Workshops, particularly during the summer transition period, should be the anchor for the ODS education and integration process. This educational initiative should also include all members of the USAFA community who come into contact with the cadets.

g. Education should include specific examples of how ODS is or can be represented in the curriculum design and classroom teaching methods. ODS education and training should become an embedded process in the professional development programs conducted by each department, and would include periodic discussions of key topics in ODS.

h. Educational seminars should be established for all new faculty and staff on ODS, led by more experienced faculty, particularly in discussing faculty roles

in ODS implementation with specific examples (such as best practices) on how these roles are executed.

    i.   The Center for Education Excellence should be tasked to develop some educational and experience-based workshops to teach cadets, faculty, coaches, and staff the skill of effective feedback giving and receiving.

    j.   A lot of developmental information is lost when many do not understand how to give and receive effective feedback. A system of training and education on feedback needs to be created.

        i.   The Center for Creative Leadership in Greensboro, NC, has significant research and experience in feedback technology and conducts weeklong workshops that educate and train how to provide effective feedback. This training and education are around the S-B-I model of feedback.

        ii.   USAFA could send some key personnel to this experience and serve as the core of an effort to build feedback knowledge, skill, and ability at USAFA.

        iii.   These workshops can be provided as online training modules or as both in-class and online experiences that can be worked in as part of the professional development system at the USAFA for faculty and staff.

        iv.   AOCs who receive formal education in counseling (which includes significant feedback and reflective components) can be tasked to be the focal point of this education and training effort. This will provide exposure to the AOCs to faculty, staff, coaches, and instructors across the major programs and be a major source of integration across programs and mission elements.

The Faculty's Role in Assessing Character

3.   The Dean, working in close coordination with the Commandant, should determine what aspect of the character development process and observable behaviors faculty can comment on as valuable input to cadet development, outside of the academic grade, and can be incorporated by the AOC in cadet leader development plans or portfolios and be a means to integrate the cadet leader development experience.

    a.   Faculty input should focus on those cadets who struggle academically, but whose struggle results from a lack of disciplined commitment to excellence and/or cadets whose behaviors are inconsistent with any of the ODS outcomes.

    b.   Faculty should be required to comment on the character-based behaviors of the cadets who are at or below the minimum 2.0 passing mark for an academic course.

Faculty Personal Development

4.   Faculty development should be the Dean's top priority.

    a.   Each and every faculty member should be provided the opportunity to learn and grow throughout their entire assignment at the Academy, consistent with AFDD 1-1, Force Development.

    b.   Rigorous faculty development will provide for the integration of ODS in the classroom, because faculty development activities can become the vehicle for the

important dialogue required to add ODS teachable moments in lessons, courses, and curriculum.

c. These conversations need to be ongoing and iterative throughout every semester to create the energy and synergy among faculty members essential for effective ODS implementation.

Department Head Accountability

5. Department Head Accountability

a. During the Dean's periodic visits to each department for briefings, focus on ODS until it is effectively embedded in how business is conducted. Discuss, in detail, with each department head, with senior faculty and course directors present, how they are implementing a spirit of ODS in the classroom and how they are drawing connections within and across departments and across programs. Department heads should be able to brief how their programs and courses are executed consistent with the requirements of ODS.

b. Core course and program directors should be able to brief how their courses and programs are connected to the requirements of ODS and the development of leaders of character.

c. Departments should be required to discuss best teaching practices that can be shared within and across programs.

d. Departments should also be able to describe their assessment program to determine how effective their courses and programs are at implementing ODS.

e. When the Dean periodically visits classes unannounced, as part of a larger assessment initiative, feedback should be provided on the manner in which the faculty implements the spirit of ODS in their classroom instructional designs and in-class teaching strategies.

f. The Dean, or the Vice Dean, should periodically meet with the rotating and permanent faculty in focus groups (again, as part of a larger assessment initiative) to understand the successes, failures, and challenges faced by the faculty in the execution of instruction through the lens of ODS.

Mid-Term

Curriculum and Programs: Integration of Character Development Programs in the Curriculum

6. Curriculum and programs

Review the curriculum to see how the spiritual, ethical, and social components of character are integrated into the academic curriculum. There should be a core course on comparative religions; how religion affects politics and science; and how cultural clashes affect the use of the military element of power.

7. Faculty should be required to fill out a Cadet Evaluation Report on selected cadets in each class. The CER would be a behaviorally anchored rating system, consistent with ODS related outcomes.

a. This information will be provided to the cadet, as well as the AOC, for integration in the cadet's overall commissioning suitability performance file.

b. The Center for Character Development, in conjunction with the Dean, Commandant, and Athletic Director, should participate in the development of a character assessment form, consistent with ODS and the ODS outcomes, that provides a consistent assessment of cadet character-based behavior that can be used across programs and cadet developmental contexts.

c. In addition, faculty members should be actively involved in evaluating cadets in regard to their development in ODS. There should be a lottery system that randomly assigns two faculty assessments per cadet each semester, but the assignment shouldn't be revealed until the last two weeks of the semester.

d. The faculty's assessment of the cadet should be briefed carefully to the cadet after the end of the semester and submitted to the AOC for use in assessing the cadet's overall grade for that semester.

Athletic Director/Staff/Coaches

Short Term

Implementation and Integration: Integrating ODS in Programs

1. The Athletic Director (or Head of the Department of Physical Education) should be responsible for the integration of ODS throughout the athletic curriculum, the intramural program and the intercollegiate athletic program.

   a. The first step for the Department of Physical Education is to conduct a rigorous review of courses to determine where ODS teachable moments can be used.

   b. Require periodic briefings from PE instructors and coaches on how they are using ODS as a lens to build effective intramural programs that develop leaders of character with a winning spirit but a sense of fair play. Fair play assessment should be a regular part of ODS implementation in athletics.

   c. The AD must make a concerted effort to ensure that the coaches, instructors, and support staff are educated and trained in the structure, process, and content of ODS and initiate processes to ensure that ODS is integrated in all athletic, club, and intramural activities.

   d. The AD should make ODS implementation *an outcome goal* for the athletic and physical programs. The AD must ensure that an explicit training and education program around ODS is implemented and sustained across athletic and physical education programs. This training and education should be part of an institutionalized professional military learning program.

   e. The AD should consider capitalizing on the education and training programs organized by the Dean and Commandant in this effort. This effort should include the construction and institutionalization of an ODS training and education program for all physical education teachers, coaches, and staff. This program should socialize new PE teachers, coaches, and staff on ODS, using experienced teachers

and mentors, and create the conditions for continuous reinforcement of ODS principles. This education and training program would include

    i.   Annual half-day workshops on the structure, process, and content of ODS and current initiatives in ODS implementation.

    ii.   Conversations with experienced staff on the meaning of ODS and why it is important in the development of leaders of character.

    iii.   Discussion of specific examples of how ODS, either explicitly or implicitly, is implemented in the conduct of athletic activities.

The Intramural Program

2. The Department of Physical Education should also review and revise the intramural program to ensure that it is invigorated with ODS principles and processes.

    a.   Every intramural event should be organized and structured in accordance with military standards of conduct, discipline, roles and responsibilities, and ranks and accountability. Every intramural event should be a military event, and the cadets should conduct themselves accordingly. The entire intramural chain of command should be carefully supervised by an officer who can ensure that cadets are learning and growing in relationship to the ODS desired outcomes.

    b.   The intramural field is the training ground for courage, duty, honor, and discipline. The Academy needs to seize intramurals for the opportunity they represent for leadership and character development. Cadets should be assessed against their performance and attitude in intramurals. This is a huge developmental training ground for cadets, and it needs to be treated as such.

Create an Assessment Process

3. AD should create an *assessment process*, in conjunction with the Academy's Research and Assessment Division, that provides feedback on the success of the implementation of ODS.

Share Best Practices

4. AD should require his staff and faculty to regularly communicate with the Dean and Commandant staff and programs sharing "best practices" in ODS implementation.

Briefbacks From Staff and Faculty

5. AD should require all coaches, instructors, and staff to clearly articulate how they implement and reinforce the spirit of ODS within their programs. Once the staff has been thoroughly educated on the requirements of ODS and their role in its implementation, staff should be required to develop specific plans for how they will integrate ODS principles in their programs.

ODS Accountability in Performance Appraisals

6. AD should make ODS integration an accountable item on the performance evaluations of all coaches and instructors.

    a. An annual performance goal setting and planning session should include goals and objectives involved in ODS implementation and evaluation.

    b. Civilian contracts should include measures that hold civilians (and civilian Title X faculty) accountable for behavior and performance consistent with ODS. Require annual (or some reasonable interval) briefings from coaches on how they are using ODS as a lens to build effective athletic programs that *win*, but also develop leaders of character, with a sense of fair play.

    c. In addition, the faculty needs to ensure that, when appropriate, cadets be placed in leadership roles and assessed against their performance in those roles in accordance with the guidelines of ODS.

    d. One athletic department faculty member should assess a cadet per semester on the cadet evaluation report.

Mid-Term

Implementation and Integration

7. Faculty and coaches should be required to fill out a Cadet Evaluation Report on selected cadets in each class. The report would be a behaviorally anchored rating system, consistent with ODS and character outcomes.

    a. The Center for Character Development, in conjunction with the Dean, Commandant, and Athletic Director, should participate in the development of a character assessment form, consistent with ODS and the ODS outcomes, that provides a consistent assessment of cadet character-based behavior that can be used across programs and cadet developmental contexts.

    b. This information will be provided to the cadet, as well as the AOC, in determining the cadet's overall commissioning suitability and performance.

    c. In addition, faculty members should be actively involved in evaluating cadets in regard to their development in ODS. There should be a lottery system that randomly assigns two faculty assessments per cadet each semester, but the assignment shouldn't be revealed until the last two weeks of the semester.

    d. The faculty and coaches' assessment of the cadet should be briefed carefully to the cadet after the end of the semester and submitted to the AOC for use in assessing the cadet's overall grade for that semester.

Commissioning Suitability Action Plan

Screening and Board Process

Determination of commissioning suitability should be the natural outgrowth of existing developmental reviews and processes and should not be viewed a significant add-on requirement to what is already a very time-consuming schedule for both cadets and staff. Input on character and suitability that is provided within the context of ODS must be carefully designed, tested, and validated as part of a larger institutional effort in assessment. These inputs should be easy to complete, provide targeted observations on cadets that are behaviorally anchored judgments

embedded in ODS, and designed to provide specific performance information around the ten ODS outcomes. As previously mentioned, the Commandant must clearly delineate the roles and responsibilities of the AOCs in developing and assessing cadets as leaders of character.

It would be appropriate to make commissioning suitability judgments, in some formal manner, periodically in the cadets' 47-month developmental journey. Initially, we recommend that this process would take the form of screening procedures conducted in the following manner:

1. Commissioning suitability measures need to also be behaviorally anchored and based on what can be observed. USAFA, or any commissioning source, must identify and describe the behaviors associated with leaders of character and those suitable for commissioning, then provide assessments from multiple perspectives on the observed behavior. In sum, these observations serve as the basis for determination of military aptitude and commissioning suitability.

2. The first two years at the USAFA should be identified and understood by the cadets, faculty, and staff as a probationary period. By this we mean that each cadet, with assistance from the Academy, is determining whether or not the Academy is a suitable fit. At the same time, the Academy will be evaluating carefully (through this commissioning suitability screening process grounded in the cadet's PDP process) whether or not the cadet has the necessary motivation and potential to benefit from the ODS experience. It must be reinforced for cadets during this period that attending the Academy is a privilege, not an entitlement, and that cadets must demonstrate the motivation, by virtue of their behavior, to be committed to a journey of development as a leader of character. Additionally, as part of the review process, all cadets should be required to write a reflection, as part of their portfolio for review, on why they think they have the potential for commissioning and what they need to accomplish in their development or, in the case of the senior cadets, why they should be commissioned in the United States Air Force.

3. The cadets are currently reviewed, as a matter of procedure, at the end of each academic year in the areas of academic, physical, and military performance and conduct. Based on a more comprehensive definition and description of commissioning suitability presented in this study report, this review should be expanded to include the character component of suitability. Based on this more comprehensive review of cadet performance, a better determination can be made about cadet development and performance, and early decision can be made on promotion to the next class, promotion with probation, promotion with specific requirements for remediation, or disenrollment. Additionally, the bottom 5 percent of each class, or anyone who has been flagged based on the 360 input of the cadet's community of practice by a review process, should be given a more rigorous review.

4. In the spring of a cadet's third class year, a hard look, based on the procedures and criteria in item 2 above, should be conducted with a clear decision made in terms of the potential for continued growth in ODS and suitability for commissioning.

5. A final look should be conducted by the end of the fall semester in the cadet's senior year. This review would also include the bottom 5 percent of cadets in the senior class, and those who have been flagged by the chain of command based on 360 input of the cadet's community of practice should be given a more rigorous review and decision for

disposition. The decision at this point could include (1) graduate with commission, graduate without commission, (2) graduate with commission but only after having successfully completed a mentorship program during the second semester, or (3) retention but require more remediation and development for a summer, another semester, or another year. Finally, a decision could be made that gives the cadet a certificate of attendance, with an appropriate grade transcript, and dismissal from the Academy.

6. At each of the phases of this review process, cadets should receive a letter, signed by the Commandant, for example, congratulating them on their successful completion of each year and on their demonstrated motivation to development as a leader of character. This action would make the process special for the cadets, a defining moment in their developmental journey, and reinforce the explicit importance of cadet ownership for their developmental journey.

7. At the end of the sophomore year, and prior to the junior year, a special ceremony should be held to celebrate the successful transition from a probationary period to the joining of the profession as a junior. This ceremony should include an inspirational presentation and the retaking of the oath of allegiance to the nation to distinctively mark this important transition.

8. Now, the intent here would be for the AOC, the integrator of the ODS at the level of the cadet, to be the key screener of the cadet's record, in conjunction with guidance provided by the Commandant of Cadets. Based on this guidance, some files might be forwarded to the Group AOC for further screening, judgment, and disposition. If the Group AOC felt that a given cadet's performance warranted an additional look that would possibly result in being extended at the Academy or being disenrolled, that file would be brought to the attention of the Commandant and a board proceeding that would include a panel of selected officers and would meet to judge and determine disposition of the cadet, consistent with the options laid out earlier in this discussion.

Psychological Instrument Action Plan

1. The program should be developed, instituted, and guided by trained, knowledgeable, proficient, and appropriately credentialed personnel.

2. The program should be instituted in full transparency with appropriate USAFA faculty.

3. The scheduled use of and purpose for psychological tests should be transparent to the cadet population. Testing strategy, schedules, and purposes should not be a surprise.

4. The use of test data and their interpretation must be clearly defined *before* a testing program is initiated. Examples of key questions include the following:

   a. How will psychological test data be used? Cadets need to understand that this is a mechanism for coaching and character development—test results will not lead to punitive actions. (Can this be promised? Might bad results lead to termination? to lack of commissioning?)

   b. How will psychological test data be stored? What conditions of privacy of test results and their interpretation can be expected?

    c. How will psychological test data be shared with the test takers (cadets)? Each cadet should have an individualized and private review session to understand the results, their application, and their usefulness.

    d. How will psychological test data be shared with faculty members? (Large privacy and need-to-know issues *must* be worked out ahead of time.)

    e. How will psychological test data affect short- and long-term goals? For example, if issues are uncovered, what psychological counseling opportunities *must* be made available? What guidance or counseling will be *compelled* on condition of retaining cadet status? How will psychological tools be applied to measure and coach growth? If a cadet does not grow and is, in fact, not commissioned, can the cadet implicate this as the Academy's failure and seek legal relief?

    f. How long will psychological test data be retained (another legal question)? Are the data considered "medical records," which, depending on the state, must be retained for a certain number of years after the 21st birthday.

5. What is being considered is not a one-stop psychological testing program, but rather a character development program in which the careful application of psychological assessment instruments are but one of the tools used to build and coach character. This is a long-term investment.

6. Professional assessment. USAFA may find it necessary to establish an assessment center.

7. The number of trained professionals to administer, interpret, and coach the development of cadets based on the use of these tests exceeds the current capacity of the faculty and AOCs. AOCs receive counseling education and this could be part of the curriculum at UCCS. Selected trained faculty members in the Behavioral Sciences and Leadership Department are voluntarily administering a program to approximately 50 cadets in the LEAD program. However, any effort of this magnitude applied across all cadets at USAFA would soon overwhelm the resources currently available. Any consideration to embark on a psychological instrument assessment and coaching program requires a significant investment of resources, particularly manpower.

Annex 3: Congressional Offices and Staff Interviews

	Congressional Office Member and Location of Interview	Member of Armed Services Committee	Member With Military Service*	Date Interview Completed (2004)	Staff Persons Responsible for Service Academy Program Interviewed
	Rep. Beauprez (R-CO) Wheat Ridge, CO†	No	No	Jul 30	Ms. Marge Klein, District Director
1	Sen. Feinstein (D-CA) San Francisco, CA	No	No	Aug 27	Mr. John Replogle, Assistant Field Representative
2	Rep. Shimkus (R-IL) Collinsville, IL	No	Yes	Sep 7	Ms. Dora Rohan, Executive Assistant/Casework Mgr
3	Rep. Smith (D-WA) Washington, D.C.	Yes	No	Sep 8	Mr. Lars Anderson, Communications Director
4	Rep. Gillmor (R-OH) Washington, D.C.	No	Yes	Sep 8	Mr. Mark Wellman, Chief of Staff
5	Sen. Carper (D-DE) Dover, DE	No	Yes	Sep 9	Ms. Lori James, Kent County Regional Director
6	Rep. Kline (R-MN) Burnsville, MN	Yes	Yes	Sep 17	Mr. Marcus Esmay, Constituent Outreach
7	Rep. Cole (R-OK) Norman, OK	Yes	No	Sep 17	Ms. Bethany Cowan, Caseworker
8	Rep. Marshall (D-GA) Macon, GA	Yes	Yes	Sep 24	Mr. Hobby Stripling, District Director; Ms. Patricia Kelley, Congressional Aide
9	Sen. Graham (R-SC) Greenville, SC	Yes	Yes	Oct 1	Ms. Jean Price, Low Country Regional Director; Ms. Jane Goolsby, State Director
10	Sen. McCain (R-AZ) Phoenix, AZ	Yes	Yes	Oct 1	Mr. Rashaad Wilford, Staff Assistant; Mr. Ron Ballard, Chair, Nomination Committee
11	Rep. Jackson-Lee (D-TX) Houston, TX	No	No	Oct 15	Mr. Reginald McKamie, Chair, Nomination Recommendation Committee
12	Sen. Santorum (R-PA) Pittsburgh, PA	No	No	Oct 29	Ms. Anne Blocksidge, Veterans and Military Affairs Coordinator
13	Rep. DeLauro (D-CT) New Haven, CT	No	No	Nov 5	Ms. Mara Saccente, Congressional Aide
14	Rep. Hooley (D-OR) Salem, OR	No	No	Nov 22	Mr. Bill Ward, Veterans and Military Advisor
15	Sen. Ensign (R-NV) Las Vegas, NV	Yes	No	Dec 1	Ms. Margot Allen, Regional Representative; Ms. Randi, Anzevino Staff Assistant
16	Sen. Landrieu (D-LA) Baton Rouge, LA	No	No	Dec 20	Ms. Shannon Langlois, Constituent Services Manager
17	Sen. Nelson (D-FL) Orlando, FL	Yes	Yes	Dec 23	Mr. Jeff Scarpiello, Senior Constituent Advocate
*Active Duty or Reserves					
† Interview with Ms. Marge Klein of Representative Beauprez' office was a pilot interview that aided the Study Team in finalizing the congressional staff interview questionnaire.					

Annex 3: Congressional Offices and Staff Interviews

Source: United States Congress. 2003. *Congressional Directory 2003-2004 One Hundred Eighth Congress.* Senate Publication 108-18, Joint Committee on Printing. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office.

Annex 4: Congressional Staff Background Information Form

To be completed by lead staff person responsible for the Congressional nomination process for the military service academies.

Version 1—August 19, 2004

The Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. James G. Roche, through the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MRM) at the Pentagon, awarded a contract to Analytic Services, Inc., (ANSER) to study the commissioning suitability screening process and the Four Class System at the U.S. Air Force Academy. The Study will include specific recommendations for improvement at the Academy. The roles of Congressional Members and Admission Liaison Officers in screening and recommending potential officer candidates are receiving special emphasis. Thank you for participating in this important study. Your input will ensure our efforts are of the highest quality. Your assistance ultimately will have an impact on the ability of our armed forces to produce the finest officers possible to lead our servicemen and servicewomen in defense of the nation.

This form requests general information about you and the process used by your office to nominate applicants to the Air Force Academy. The form should be completed before your interview. Your responses to these background items will allow researchers to analyze interviews more effectively. Also, your answers will be used to prepare a final report, but it will be on a non-attribution basis. However, we may give credit to your office by name in cases where it is determined that you have best practices. If you have any questions, please call Dr. Dale Jones at 719-262-3856.

Date:_____

Congressional Office: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Address of your office: _____

Phone: _____

Fax:_____

Email: _____

1. Are you a graduate of a service academy? _____ If yes, which one/year? _____

Annex 4: Congressional Staff Background Information Form

2. If you have served in the military, please state what branch of service, period of years, rank, and whether active duty, reserves, or national guard.

_____

_____

3. For how many years have you been employed by your Member of Congress? _____

4. For how many total years have you been employed by any Member of Congress? _____

5. For how many years have you performed staff work for your office's academy nomination process? _____

6. For how many years have you been in charge of your office's academy nomination process? _____

7. Please indicate any of the following you have done:

Yes	No	Activity	Which Academy?
		Visited an Academy	
		Attended an Academy-hosted tour for Congressional staffs	
		Observed an Admissions Board at an Academy	
		Attended a briefing to Congressional staffs given by Academy officials at a site away from the Academy	
		Attended or participated in a state, regional, or local Academy Day	
		Attended or participated in an Academy Parents Club event	

8. Which Congressional nomination method does your Member use?

_____ Competitive Nomination

_____ Principle with Competing Alternates

_____ Principle with Numbered Alternates

_____ It varies from year to year

9. Currently, how many of your office's nominees are enrolled at the academies?

_____ U.S. Air Force Academy

_____ U.S. Military Academy

_____ U.S. Naval Academy

_____ U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

10. Does your office have any interaction with Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs) for the *Air Force Academy*? _____ If yes, please describe the interaction.

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Please make any additional comments you wish to make.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for your participation!

Please fax form to:

Dr. Dale Jones

719-262-4416

Annex 4: Congressional Staff Background Information Form

Annex 5: Interview Questionnaire for Congressional Staff

Version 1—August 19, 2004

Interviewer(s): _____

Interviewee: _____

Date: _____

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The Secretary of the Air Force, Dr. James G. Roche, through the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MRM) at the Pentagon, awarded a contract to Analytic Services, Inc., (ANSER) to study the commissioning suitability screening process and the Four Class System at the U.S. Air Force Academy. This Study will include specific recommendations for improvement at the Academy. The roles of Congressional Members and Admissions Liaison Officers in screening and recommending potential officer candidates are receiving special emphasis. We thank Representative/Senator _____ for participating in this important study. Thank you for taking your valuable time to meet with me/us and to answer my/our questions. Your input will ensure our efforts are of the highest quality. Your assistance ultimately will have an impact on the ability of our armed forces to produce the finest officers possible to lead our servicemen and servicewomen in defense of the nation.

I/we will ask you a predetermined set of questions pertaining to the process used by your office to nominate applicants to the service academies, in particular the Air Force Academy. I/we may ask you some follow-up questions to obtain more specific information. I/we will take notes and will not tape record the interview. Your answers will be used to prepare a final report, but it will be on a non-attribution basis. However, we will give credit to your office by name in cases where it is determined that you have best practices.

Interview Number: _____

Interviewer(s): _____

Name(s) of Interviewee(s): _____

Title: _____

Office: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Start Time: _____

Annex 5: Interview Questionnaire for Congressional Staff

Finish Time: _____

PART I: BACKGROUND

1. What are your major duties and responsibilities in your present position?

2. What is your role regarding the process used by your office for nominating students to the service academies?

3. What kind of a priority is the nomination process for your office?

PART II: NOMINATION PROCESS FOR YOUR OFFICE

4. If your Member is in his/her first term, how did your office learn about nomination procedures and expectations and how did it go about setting up a nomination process?

5. Please describe the steps in the process used by your office for nominating students to the service academies.

6. Please describe how your office interacts with Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs) in the nomination process.

7. How does your office make use of evaluation input or forms from Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs) in your nomination process?

8. How does your office use Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs) in the process of interviewing applicants? If your office does not, why not?

9. What are the primary or key factors for evaluating applicants that your nomination process emphasizes in application reviews, interviews, and nominations?

10. Please comment on how important the following factors are for evaluating applicants and how your nomination process takes them into account:

a. Intellectual suitability for the academies and service as an officer.

b. Physical suitability…

c. Character suitability…

d. Social suitability…

e. Spiritual suitability…

f. Ethical and moral suitability…

g. Professional suitability…

h. Commissioning suitability…

11. Please comment on how important the following factors are for evaluating applicants and how your nomination process takes them into account:

a. Gender of applicants

b. Race and ethnicity of applicants

c. Citizenship qualities of applicants

d. Intercollegiate athlete applicants

e. Honor Society and Honor Roll applicants

f. Work experience possessed by applicants

g. Reputation of applicants' high schools

h. Local community of applicants

i. Mistakes made by or trouble experienced by applicants

j. Character of applicants

k. Giving applicants a "second chance"

l. Maturity of applicants

m. "Special circumstances" or "personal factors" of applicants

12. What is Representative/Senator _____ role? How much does he/she get involved in the nomination process? Why?

13. In general, who sits on your nomination panels to evaluate applicants and make recommendations to Representative/Senator _____?

14. How do you decide who to invite to be members of your nomination panels?

15. Can you suggest two of your panel members we can talk with about their perspectives on the nomination process? How can we reach those persons?

16. May we have some copies of your packets that you mail to applicants, interview question sheets, and application and interview evaluation forms?

17. How does the political nature of the business conducted by your office affect your nomination process?

18. Does your office monitor or track the performance, progress, and graduation rates of your nominees that enter the academies?

PART III: WORKING WITH THE SERVICE ACADEMIES

19. Who are the points of contact for each service academy that you communicate with for guidance, questions, and information about the nomination process? May we please have their names and phone numbers?

20. Please tell us your impressions of working with each military service and service academy for the nomination process.

21. Please comment on the pros and cons of the dual application process which requires students to apply to both your office for a nomination and to each service academy.

22. What is your assessment of the Air Force Academy's nomination process?

23. What are your impressions of the entire nomination process?

24. What frustrations do you have and what are you pleased with regarding the nomination process?

PART IV: OTHER CONGRESSIONAL OFFICES

25. What other Congressional offices do you think do a good job with their nomination process? Why and how do those offices do it well?

26. Please describe any differences (good or bad) between how Representatives and Senators conduct their nomination processes.

PART V: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS

27. What recommendations do you have for changing your own office's nomination process?

28. How will these changes result in improvements?

29. What recommendations do you have for changing any part of the service academy nomination process?

30. How can the nomination process be streamlined?

31. How will these changes result in improvements?

PART VI: COMMENTS REGARDING THE STUDY

32. What advice do you have for us regarding how we are conducting our study?

33. What else would you like to tell us about the nomination process and our study?

Annex 6: Congressional Staff Interview Findings

For the following findings, "S" followed by a number refers to the question number on the 11-question Congressional Staff Background Information Form (Annex 4) completed by staff interviewees prior to the start of interviews. Additionally, "Q" followed by a number refers to the question number on the 33-question Interview Questionnaire for Congressional Staff (Annex 5).

Congressional Staff Background Information

Finding 1: Congressional staffs responsible for leading their academy nomination processes have extensive experience managing the nomination process, except for those staffs working for Members who are freshmen in Congress.

Guidance From Service Academies

A. (S7) Participation in academy activities

Finding 2: Slightly more than half of congressional staffs responsible for leading their academy nomination processes have visited an academy, attended an academy-hosted tour for congressional staff, attended a briefing to congressional staffs at a site away from the academies, or attended an Academy Day event. Visits and attendance at academy-hosted tours to USAFA slightly outnumber those to USMA and USNA.

B. (Q4) Learned about and set up nomination procedures when the Member took office

Finding 3: Congressional offices primarily rely on other congressional offices to learn about the nomination process and set up their own nomination process, or they learn on their own by taking the initiative to seek assistance.

C. (Q19) Knowledge of points of contact for each Service academy

Finding 4: Most congressional offices know who the primary admissions office points of contact are for USAFA, USMA, and USNA.

Finding 5: Without solicitation, many congressional offices praised the outstanding performance of Ms. Karen Parker, former admissions office point of contact for USAFA.

D. Openness to additional guidance from service academies

Finding 6: Congressional offices are open to additional guidance from Service academy admissions offices.

Roles and Responsibilities

A. (Q6) Congressional staff interaction with ALOs

Finding 7: Approximately 65 percent (11 of 17) of congressional staffs have very little or no interaction with any of the academy ALOs. More than one-third either initially confuse ALOs with admissions office points of contact and/or do not know what the roles of ALOs are.

B. (Q7) Congressional staff use of evaluation input or forms from ALOs

Finding 8: Only 2 of 17 congressional staffs use ALO evaluation input as part of their evaluation process for determining nominees.

C. (Q8) Congressional staff use of ALOs on boards to interview applicants

Finding 9: Only 5 of 17 congressional staffs use ALOs as members of boards, panels, or committees to interview applicants.

Character and Commissioning Suitability

A. (Q9) Primary or key factors for evaluating applicants

Finding 10: When asked an open-ended question about what primary or key factors they use to evaluate applicants, congressional staffs do not mention the word *character*. In the rare instances that the word *character* is mentioned during the conversation for this question, it is defined as meaning a "good leader."

B. (Q10.c.) Character suitability for evaluating applicants

Finding 11: When prompted with a question about the importance of *character suitability*, congressional staffs consider it a very important factor in evaluating applicants. A few staffs understand the meaning of character; however, many do not have a good and consistent understanding of the meaning of character.

C. (Q10.h.) Commissioning suitability for evaluating applicants

Finding 12: When prompted with a question about the importance of commissioning suitability, congressional staffs consider it an important factor in evaluating applicants.

D. (Q11.j.) Character of applicants for evaluating applicants

Finding 13: When prompted with a question about the importance of *character*, congressional staffs consider it a very important factor in evaluating applicants. They assume that character is present in those students applying for admission to an academy and seeking a nomination. However, they do not have a good and consistent understanding of the meaning of character.

E. Focusing on character

Finding 14: Congressional offices seek nominees who are good persons of high quality (which they believe equates to character) and evaluate applicants on many factors that are essentially proxies for character but do not evaluate applicants by focusing directly on the true meaning of character.

F. (Q16) Reference to character in any application materials sent to applicants

Finding 15: Rarely is character mentioned in congressional office application materials such as letters from congressional offices to applicants, instructions to applicants, and guidelines and score sheets for interview board members. (*Note:* The research Team did not receive full sets of application materials from every office.)

Best Practices of Congressional Offices

Finding 16: Congressional office nomination procedures and programs vary in terms of their quality, degree of innovation, and events for applicants, nominees, and cadets or midshipmen. Some congressional offices have outstanding procedures and programs that can serve as best practices.

Improvements to and Streamlining of the Nomination Process

A. (Q20) Impressions of working with each service academy

Finding 17: Congressional staffs think that admissions offices at all the academies are helpful and responsive. When they call admissions offices with questions or to obtain information, the admissions offices always respond, and most of the time they do so relatively quickly. Additionally, they point out that USAFA is particularly good to work with.

B. (Q21) Pros and cons of the dual application process

Finding 18: Congressional staffs believe the dual application process is good, primarily because it requires greater effort on the part of applicants, testing their commitment, and secondarily because it enhances the quality of reviewing applicants. On the other hand, they believe that the dual application process is confusing to applicants and that aspects of it should be more transparent.

C. (Q22) Assessment of the USAFA nomination, evaluation, and acceptance processes

Finding 19: Congressional staffs believe that the USAFA nomination, evaluation, and acceptance processes operate well, but they do not understand the processes that occur at USAFA regarding evaluating applicants and making offers of acceptance.

D. (Q23) Impressions of the entire nomination process

Finding 20: Congressional staffs believe that, overall, the nomination process is good and that it weeds out applicants who are not as serious as they need to be.

E. (Q24) Frustrations and satisfactions with the nomination process

Finding 21: Congressional staffs would like to have earlier, more complete, and more accurate status information about all applicants from their districts, are frustrated that they cannot submit more nominations and obtain more academy appointments, and generally are pleased with various aspects of the nomination and selection process.

F. (Q26) Comparison of Representatives' and Senators' nomination processes

Finding 22: Generally, within a state, Senate offices and Representative offices cooperate and coordinate well for the nomination process. Furthermore, generally, they cooperate and coordinate in a nonpartisan manner in conducting the nomination process.

G. (Q27) Recommendations for changing office nomination processes

Finding 23: Congressional staffs are open-minded about how to improve their own nomination process and plan to do so by increasing outreach efforts to potential applicants, establishing an interview board, committee, or panel in those cases where they are not using one, and modifying some forms used by interview board members.

H. (Q29) Recommendations for changing any part of the service academy nomination process

Finding 24: Congressional offices are basically satisfied with the application and nomination processes. However, they have a few recommendations for the academies to make improvements, such as making the dual application process clearer to applicants, being more active in recruiting applicants, having ALOs contact Congressional offices more often, and not requiring returning cadets from sabbaticals to go through the nomination process again.

I. (Q30) Streamlining the nomination process

Finding 25: Congressional offices believe that the application and nomination processes are sufficiently streamlined and, thus, they have very few recommendations for further streamlining.

J. Nomination orientation

Finding 26: Representatives' offices are oriented more toward nominating applicants and less toward screening out applicants.

Additional Findings That Emerged During the Interviews

Finding 27: Congressional offices and the Admissions Office believe that each other is serving the primary role of conducting character screening.

Finding 28: Approximately 25 percent (4 of 17) of congressional offices do not use interview panels, boards, or committees to evaluate applicants and make recommendations to the Member of Congress for nominations. Congressional offices that do use them understand how valuable they are to the evaluation process. Congressional offices that do not use them believe that their one-person staff member who is responsible for the academy nomination process can adequately review, evaluate, and make recommendations for nominees to the Member while using the monthly status report from the academies. Some congressional offices that do not use them express some appreciation for their potential value.

Annex 6: Congressional Staff Interview Findings

Annex 7: Best Practices of Congressional Offices

1. An aggressive visitation program is conducted with middle schools and high schools to inform them about opportunities at the Service academies, the missions of the academies, and the application and nomination processes. The program includes the use of ALOs to reach students early in schools to stimulate interest and preparation.

2. The nomination process begins early in the spring or no later than early summer, conducts applicant interviews before Thanksgiving, and selects and announces nominees in December well before Christmas.

3. Some Congressional offices use highly effective booklets, information packets, or newsletters to inform prospective candidates about the application process. The better ones have detailed procedures and expectations, as well as photographs of motivational scenes such as the academies, cadets or midshipmen in uniform engaged in academy activities, or the Member congratulating nominees. For example, one office produced a two-page (front and back) "Service Academy Nomination" information sheet that provides an overview of the Member's nomination process. Another one produced a booklet titled "Academy Opportunities."

4. Approximately 75 percent of the Congressional offices interviewed use boards, panels, or committees with prestigious members of the community to interview applicants. Members include current or former members of the military, civic leaders, educators, judges, and businesspersons. The boards enable the staffs conducting the nomination process to get to know the applicants on a personal level. Furthermore, the interviews enhance the ability of the staffs to make the best recommendations to the Member.

5. In some states, particularly those with small Congressional delegations, Senators' and Representatives' offices sometimes conduct joint events such as Academy Day. This practice tends to maximize participation by candidates and fosters collegial bipartisan cooperation among Congressional offices.

6. Current and former members of the military services who are members of the interview board wear their uniforms when interviewing applicants. Applicants like to see that, consider it "a big deal," and are motivated by it.

7. Interview boards are conducted at military bases. Its advantages: it leaves a positive impression on applicants, officers greet and welcome the applicants and their parents, and parking is free.

8. One Congressional office holds an exceptional annual reception and dinner event in December before Christmas for all nominees, cadets or midshipmen on vacation, parents, families, friends, the Member of Congress and their staff, ALOs, school principals, counselors, teachers, and writers of letters of recommendation to honor the new nominees and current cadets or midshipmen. The purpose of the event is to recognize and celebrate the success of the nominees

and cadets or midshipmen, as well as to motivate them to perform well at the academies and graduate. Each nominee is honored in front of the entire group one at a time. Photographs with the Member of Congress are taken. The outcome is a robust academy program that breeds continuous and improved participation in subsequent years. Other offices conduct similar receptions, dinners, pizza parties, or events with some elements of that described above.

9. When the congressional office makes nominations to the academies, a press release is issued at the same time.

10. The Chief of Staff for one Member of Congress stays in touch with all current cadets or midshipmen in ways such as emailing them, visiting them at each academy each year, and meeting with them when they return home to the district for vacation periods. Furthermore, the Chief of Staff tracks the performance and progress of the cadets or midshipmen. Additionally, the Chief of Staff and Member of Congress pay for and send Christmas care packages to their cadets or midshipmen. The goal is to communicate, show they care, motivate, and encourage them to graduate. One example of action taken is emailing the senior cadets or midshipmen to look out for the first-year cadets or midshipmen if they are not doing well or they have not communicated with the Chief of Staff.

11. The management and administrative practices for the review, evaluation, interview, and nomination processes include methods to increase the quality of those processes. First, it is believed that this congressional office is the first to use the InterTrack Company software program to administer the academy application process. Second, the office hires three Veterans Administration interns at minimum wages to perform duties that assist with administering the process. Third, interview board members receive a thick handbook that includes such items as a seven-page "United States Service Academies Board Member Scoring Guidelines and Sample Questions." Fourth, after the four regional interview sites complete their interviews, the interview board members subsequently participate in a State Board to finalize the recommended nominees to the Senator.

12. A few congressional offices assist applicants who do not succeed in the competitive process to gain an appointment to an academy. For example, one Senator's office shares with Florida universities the lists of those applicants who are not nominated to the academies and those who are nominated but do not receive appointments. This results in some of those highly qualified students receiving scholarships to some of the universities. Another Senator's office assists by helping students get admitted to regional military preparatory schools such as New Mexico Military Institute and Northwestern Prep.

Annex 8: Website Survey for Admissions Liaison Officers

USAF Survey Control Number (SCN) 05-008

Valid Through 31 December 2005

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this important survey of the role of Admissions Liaison Officers (ALOs) in the Air Force Academy admissions process. The Secretary of the Air Force, through the Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs (SAF/MRM), authorized a study of the commissioning suitability screening process and the Four Class System at the Air Force Academy. This survey is one part of the study. One of the study's goals is to make recommendations for improvement of the Academy admissions process. This survey is an opportunity for you to provide meaningful feedback to the study Team. Please consider your responses carefully and answer the questions as accurately as you can. It should take you approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. Thank you for your valuable service as an ALO and for taking time to complete this survey.

The survey is a non-attribution instrument and your answers will not be linked to your identity.

BACKGROUND

1. Is this your first year as an ALO?
   ○ Yes If "Yes", please do not fill out the survey. Thank you for your interest.
   ○ No   If "No", please continue with the survey. Thank you for your participation.

Please provide background information about yourself.

2. Rank: [____ ▽]

3. Role: [_____ ▽]

4. Number of Years as an ALO: [____ ▽]

5. Admissions Region: [_____ ▽]

6. Area: [____ ▽]

7. Please identify what your **current status** is for duty with the Air Force Academy by clicking on the status that best applies to you. Then, indicate the **number of years** you have performed duty in that status.

Current Status/Duty Type   *Years*
[_____ ▽] [____ ▽]

8. What is your **commissioning source**?

175

○ Air Force Academy
○ Air Force ROTC
○ Air Force Officer Training School
○ Other

9. **If you are a graduate of a service academy, which academy?**

○ Not an Academy Graduate
○ Air Force Academy
○ Military Academy
○ Naval Academy
○ Merchant Marine Academy
○ Coast Guard Academy

ALO Duties

Please answer all the remaining questions (10. through 21.) based on your role as an Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) during the spring 2003 to spring 2004 application and nomination cycle. This cycle is for admissions to the Air Force Academy in summer 2004 for the Class of 2008.

10. How many **high schools** are assigned to you for your ALO duty?

11. On average, how many times do you **meet in person** with a potential candidate/applicant and/or his/her parents?

12. When you meet in person with a prospective candidate/applicant and/or his/her parents, what is the average **length of time** for these meetings?

13. On average, **how many other types of contacts** (including telephone calls, emails, etc.) do you have with a prospective candidate/applicant and/or his/her parents?

14. Please complete the following to reflect your interactions with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office and Congressional offices during the spring 2003 to spring 2004 application and nomination cycle. For each activity, click the appropriate button to indicate the frequency of your interaction during last year's application and nomination cycle.

Table 1: ALO Interactions with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office and Congressional Offices				
Activity	*Never*	**Rarely: 1-2 times**	**Occasionally: 3-4 times**	**Frequently: 5 or more times**
1. Accessed information from the Air Force Academy ALO website.	○	○	○	○
2. Called the Air Force Academy Admissions Office or ALO Office for telephone discussions	○	○	○	○

Table 1: ALO Interactions with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office and Congressional Offices				
Activity	*Never*	**Rarely: 1-2 times**	**Occasionally: 3-4 times**	**Frequently: 5 or more times**
3. Spoke with any Air Force Academy staff members (other than in the Admissions Office or ALO Office), such as faculty, Air Officers Commanding (AOCs), and coaches about applicants or any part of the admissions process.	○	○	○	○
4. Attended or participated in an Air Force Academy-hosted tour or training session/program for Congressional staff	○	○	○	○
5. Attended or participated in a briefing or training session/program to Congressional staffs given by Air Force Academy officials at a site away from the Academy.	○	○	○	○
6. Attended or participated in a state, regional, or local Academy Day or Academy Night.	○	○	○	○
7. Called or returned calls to Congressional offices for telephone discussions with Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	○	○	○	○
8. Visited Congressional offices for face-to-face meetings with Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	○	○	○	○
9. Provided your evaluation information, input, impressions, forms, or recommendations on Air Force Academy applicants to Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	○	○	○	○
10. Served as a member of a Congressional office Interview Board/Panel/Committee which interviewed applicants to the service academies and made nomination recommendations to a Member of Congress.	○	○	○	○

Table 1: ALO Interactions with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office and Congressional Offices				
Activity	*Never*	**Rarely: 1-2 times**	**Occasionally: 3-4 times**	**Frequently: 5 or more times**
11. Attended or participated in a Congressional office-organized ceremony, reception, or event held to give recognition and congratulations to Academy nominees and their families.	○	○	○	○

15. For the seven suitability evaluation factors (in terms of potential for admission to the Air Force Academy and for service as an Air Force officer) that you may or may not have used listed in Table 2, please rank all of the factors that you took into account (or you believe is important to take into account) for your evaluation of applicants for admission to the Air Force Academy during the spring 2003 to spring 2004 application and nomination cycle. Select the most important factor to you by clicking on "1", select the second most important factor to you by clicking on "2", and so forth up to and including "7." Click on each number only once.

Table 2: Suitability Evaluation Factors						
Suitability (for the Air Force Academy and Service as an Officer) Evaluation Factors for Applicants to the Air Force Academy						
Click on One Number Per Factor to Rank Each Factor in Terms of Its Importance to You						
Factors	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
Social	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Commissioning Potential	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Intellectual	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Character	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Professional Potential	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Spiritual	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Physical	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

16. For the additional set of fifteen evaluation factors that you may or may not have used listed in Table 3, please select the top five (5) factors that you took into account (or you believe is important to take into account) for your evaluation of applicants for admission to the Air Force Academy during the spring 2003 to spring 2004 application and nomination cycle. Select the most important factor to you by clicking on "1", select the second most important factor to you by clicking on "2", and so forth up to and including "5." Click on each number only once.

Table 3: Additional Evaluation Factors: *Evaluation Factors for Applicants to the Air Force Academy*					
Click on "1", "2", "3", "4", and "5" For Any Five Factors in Terms of Importance to You					
Factors	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
College enrollment or courses completed by applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Work experience possessed by applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Military service of applicants' family members or knowledge of life in a military career	○	○	○	○	○
Race and ethnicity of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Citizenship qualities/community involvement of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Motivation and persistence of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Giving applicants a "second chance" regarding any kind of mistake made or poor performance demonstrated at any time by applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Intercollegiate athlete applicants	○	○	○	○	○
"Special circumstances" or "personal factors" of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Maturity of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Local community of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Character of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Gender of applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Mistakes made by or trouble experienced by applicants	○	○	○	○	○
Reputation of applicants' high schools	○	○	○	○	○

17. Please complete Table 4 to reflect the degree to which you engaged in the activity listed during the spring 2003 to spring 2004 application and nomination cycle. For each activity, click the appropriate button to indicate the strength or frequency of you performing that activity during last year's application and nomination cycle.

Table 4: ALO Activities				
Activity	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**
1. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them their community service activities.	○	○	○	○
2. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them their violations of any school policies.	○	○	○	○
3. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the importance of high academic standards.	○	○	○	○

Table 4: ALO Activities				
Activity	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
4. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them what personal integrity means.	○	○	○	○
5. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the need for them to be self-reliant and self-disciplined to make it through the Academy.	○	○	○	○
6. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the need for them to be team-oriented and cooperative with others to make it through the Academy.	○	○	○	○
7. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them how the Academy is primarily a place of leader and character development.	○	○	○	○
8. When meeting with applicants, you say to the applicants, "Tell me about a time when you saw someone do something wrong. What did you do?"	○	○	○	○
9. When meeting with applicants, you say to the applicants "Tell me about a time when you faced adversity. What did you do?"	○	○	○	○
10. You meet with the parents of the applicants in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' standards of conduct necessary to attend Air Force Academy.	○	○	○	○
11. You meet with the parents of the applicants in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' motivations to attend Air Force Academy.	○	○	○	○
12. You meet with the applicants' teachers and/or coaches in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' preparation for the Air Force Academy.	○	○	○	○
13. You meet with the applicants' teachers and/or coaches in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' character.	○	○	○	○
14. When evaluating applicants, you obtain opinions or assessments about the applicants from Congressional offices that applicants have applied to.	○	○	○	○
15. During the application process, you provide your evaluation of applicants to Congressional offices that are also evaluating the applicants.	○	○	○	○

Table 4: ALO Activities				
Activity	**Never**	**Sometimes**	**Most of the Time**	**Always**
16. For your applicant evaluation process, you place the highest priority on factors associated with academic and physical qualifications for the Academy.	○	○	○	○
17. For your applicant evaluation process, you place the highest priority on factors associated with leadership and character qualifications for the Academy.	○	○	○	○
IF YOU HAVE COMMENTS				
18. Please make any comments you have about your ALO interaction with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office or ALO Office.				
19. Please make any comments you have about your ALO interaction with Congressional offices.				
20. Please make any comments you have about how you measure and assess applicant responses to issues or questions of moral complexity and character for your evaluation of applicants to the Air Force Academy.				
21. What suggestions do you have for making improvements to the admissions process for the Air Force Academy, including such areas as the role of and procedures for ALOs, the role and processes of Congressional offices, and the procedures of the Air Force Academy Admissions Office?				

Thank you for taking time to complete the ALO survey!
Analytic Services Inc. and the U.S. Air Force Academy appreciate your participation.

Annex 8: Website Survey for Admissions Liaison Officers

Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer Survey Results Summary

1. Dates the survey was available on the ALO website: January 25–February 28, 2005

2. Number of ALOs and ALO survey response rate:

Number of ALOs	1,774
Number of ALOs that completed ALO Survey	872
ALO Survey response rate	49.2 %

3. Question 2—Rank

Rank	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
O-1	5	0.6
O-2	1	0.1
O-3	72	8.3
O-4	376	43.1
O-5	344	39.5
O-6	68	7.8
O-7	5	0.6
O-8	1	0.1
Total	872	100.1

4. Question 3—Role

Role	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO)	782	89.7
Congressional Liaison Officer	15	1.7
Area Director (Liaison Officer Director)	75	8.6
Total	872	100.0

Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) Survey Results Summary

5. Question 4—Number of Years as an ALO

Years As ALO	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
1	14	1.6
2	131	15.0
3	107	12.3
4	99	11.4
5	78	8.9
6	70	8.0
7	46	5.3
8	43	4.9
9	29	3.3
10	47	5.4
11-35+	208	23.9
Total	872	100.0

6. Question 5—Admissions Region

Admissions Region	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
1—Northeast U.S.	168	19.3
2—Southeast U.S.	189	21.7
3—Upper Midwest U.S.	181	20.8
4—Lower Midwest U.S.	113	13.0
5—West U.S.	221	25.3
Total	872	100.1

7. Question 7—Current Duty Status

Current Duty Status	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
Active Duty	31	3.6
Active Duty Retired	25	2.9
Air National Guard	41	4.7
Air National Guard Retired	7	0.8
Civilian	12	1.4
Reservist Retired	76	8.7
Reservist, ALO is additional duty	154	17.7
Reservist, ALO is primary duty	526	60.3
Total	872	100.1

Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) Survey Results Summary

8. Question 8—Commissioning Source

Commissioning Source	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
Air Force Academy	376	43.1
Air Force OTS	124	14.2
Air Force ROTC	241	27.6
Other	131	15.0
Total	872	99.9

9. Question 9—Service Academy Graduates

Service Academy	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
Air Force Academy	374	42.9
Military Academy	1	0.1
Naval Academy	2	0.2
Coast Guard Academy	0	0.0
Merchant Marine Academy	0	0.0
Not an Academy Graduate	495	56.8
Total	872	100.0

10. Question 10—High Schools Assigned for ALO Duty

Number of High Schools	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
0-5	104	11.9
6-10	181	20.8
11-15	211	24.2
16-20	102	11.7
21-25	93	10.7
26-30	68	7.8
31-40	46	5.3
41-50	22	2.5
51-60	13	1.5
61-70	12	1.4
71 or more	20	2.3
Total	872	100.1

11. Question 11—Meetings with Applicants/Candidates and/or Parents

Number of Meetings	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
0	3	0.3
1	93	10.7
2	282	32.3
3	288	33.0
4	100	11.5
5	53	6.1
6	27	3.1
7	2	0.2
8	8	0.9
9	1	0.1
10 or more	15	1.7
Total	872	99.9

12. Question 12—Average Length of Time in Meetings with Applicants/Candidates and/or Parents

Average Length of Time in Meetings	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
30 minutes or less	476	54.6
30 minutes to 1 hour	98	11.2
1-2 hours	25	2.9
2 hours or more	273	31.3
Total	872	100.0

13. Question 13—Other Types of Contacts (Telephone, Email, etc.) with Applicants/Candidates and/or Parents

Number of Other Contact Types	Number of ALOs	Percentage (%) of Total
0	1	0.1
1	10	1.2
2	83	9.5
3	164	18.8
4	142	16.3
5	150	17.2
6	87	10.0
7	30	3.4
8	44	5.0
9	8	0.9
10 or more	153	17.6
Total	872	100.0

Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) Survey Results Summary

14. Question 14—ALO Interactions with Air Force Academy Admissions Office and
Congressional Offices

Activity	Never	Rarely: 1-2 Times	Occasionally: 3-4 Times	Frequently: 5 or more times
1. Accessed information from the Air Force Academy ALO website.	1	23	56	792
2. Called the Air Force Academy Admissions Office or ALO Office for telephone discussions about applicants or any part of the admissions process.	68	281	325	198
3. Spoke with any Air Force Academy staff members (other than in the Admissions Office or ALO Office), such as faculty, Air Officers Commanding (AOCs), and coaches about applicants or any part of the admissions process.	347	343	128	54
4. Attended or participated in an Air Force Academy-hosted tour or training session/program for Congressional staff.	662	163	33	14
5. Attended or participated in a briefing or training session/program to Congressional staffs given by Air Force Academy officials at a site away from the Academy.	668	160	28	16
6. Attended or participated in a state, regional, or local Academy Day or Academy Night.	178	382	221	91
7. Called or returned calls to Congressional offices for telephone discussions with Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	398	220	167	87
8. Visited Congressional offices for face-to-face meetings with Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	580	195	62	35
9. Provided your evaluation information, input, impressions, forms, or recommendations on Air Force Academy applicants to Congressional staffers responsible for the Congressional nomination process.	589	170	58	55
10. Served as a member of a Congressional office Interview Board/Panel/Committee which interviewed applicants to the service academies and made nomination recommendations to a Member of Congress.	661	148	31	32
11. Attended or participated in a Congressional office-organized ceremony, reception, or event held to give recognition and congratulations to Academy nominees and their families.	627	166	60	19

Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) Survey Results Summary

15. Question 15—Suitability Evaluation Factors

Suitability Evaluation Factors	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4	Ranked #5	Ranked #6	Ranked #7
Social	1	12	40	93	155	306	265
Commissioning potential	121	153	196	173	118	72	39
Intellectual	43	211	257	232	79	35	15
Character	592	179	65	27	7	1	1
Professional potential	111	286	197	118	92	56	12
Spiritual	3	15	17	42	88	221	484
Physical	1	16	100	187	333	181	54

16. Question 16—Additional Evaluation Factors

Additional Evaluation Factors	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4	Ranked #5
College enrollment or courses completed	14	19	57	83	86
Work experience	5	17	32	90	147
Military service of parents or knowledge of military life	8	24	61	102	202
Race and ethnicity	1	0	0	5	10
Citizenship qualities/community involvement	23	114	187	248	120
Motivation and persistence	273	304	150	63	33
Giving applicants a "second chance" regarding mistakes	0	2	2	3	8
Intercollegiate athlete	1	3	13	24	36
"Special circumstances" or "personal factors"	1	12	28	48	81
Maturity	42	204	245	148	68
Local community	0	5	3	6	8
Character	503	158	80	30	21
Gender	1	0	1	3	6
Mistakes made or trouble experienced	0	4	10	11	10
Reputation of high school	0	6	3	7	35

17. Question 17—ALO Activities

Activity	Never	Sometimes	Most of the Time	Always
1. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them their community service activities.	0	22	98	752
2. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them their violations of any school policies.	207	331	138	196
3. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the importance of high academic standards.	1	19	99	753
4. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them what personal integrity means.	9	61	178	624
5. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the need for them to be self-reliant and self-disciplined to make it through the Academy.	5	36	163	668
6. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them the need for them to be team-oriented and cooperative with others to make it through the Academy.	7	85	206	574
7. When meeting with applicants, you discuss with them how the Academy is primarily a place of leader and character development.	5	34	202	631
8. When meeting with applicants, you say to the applicants, "Tell me about a time when you saw someone do something wrong. What did you do?"	90	258	238	286
9. When meeting with applicants, you say to the applicants "Tell me about a time when you faced adversity. What did you do?"	10	75	218	569
10. You meet with the parents of the applicants in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' standards of conduct necessary to attend Air Force Academy.	89	267	237	279
11. You meet with the parents of the applicants in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' motivations to attend Air Force Academy.	71	256	202	343
12. You meet with the applicants' teachers and/or coaches in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' preparation for the Air Force Academy.	226	385	142	119
13. You meet with the applicants' teachers and/or coaches in face-to-face discussions about the applicants' character.	226	362	156	128
14. When evaluating applicants, you obtain opinions or assessments about the applicants from Congressional offices that applicants have applied to.	714	111	27	20
15. During the application process, you provide your evaluation of applicants to Congressional offices that are also evaluating the applicants.	699	117	39	17
16. For your applicant evaluation process, you place the highest priority on factors associated with academic and physical qualifications for the Academy.	228	234	250	160
17. For your applicant evaluation process, you place the highest priority on factors associated with leadership and character qualifications for the Academy.	4	27	170	671

For questions 18 through 21, the following is a brief summary of some of the significant written comments from ALOs. Because the number of written comments from ALOs is large, the following comments represent some of the most common ALO views.

18. Question 18—ALO Comments on ALO Interaction with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office ("Please make any comments you have about your ALO interaction with the Air Force Academy Admissions Office or ALO Office.")

- Many comments praise the office and its personnel as being professional, knowledgeable, prompt, helpful, and courteous.

- However, many others claim that the office is very busy, which sometimes results in difficultly reaching the intended person, suffers high turnover, is understaffed, and is slow to respond.

- In instances in which persons are hard to reach, when they do return ALO calls, they are helpful.

- Many comment on how the ALO website is good, and many complain about it.

- Some comment on the importance of character.

- Many comments state that ALOs are performing an essential role in the evaluation process through their interaction with and evaluation of candidates.

- Several comment on how they follow the chain of command with issues and avoid contacting USAFA offices.

- A few say USAFA needs more refresher training for ALOs.

- One comments on secretive processes and too many firewalled rankings by ALOs.

- A few believe that West Point is way ahead of USAFA on early appointments and letters of assurance.

- One stated that new Regional Directors and Directors of Enrollment should serve one year as an ALO.

- One believes that USNA ALOs do not have the same level of input as USAFA ALOs.

19. Question 19—ALO Comments on ALO Interaction with Congressional Offices ("Please make any comments you have about your ALO interaction with Congressional offices.")

- The level of interaction varies depending on the ALO and the congressional office.

- Many ALOs believe that they are forbidden to coordinate with congressional offices, they are taught not to do it, and they are under the impression that they are not to do it unless they receive guidance to do so. Several indicate they will increase involvement only if specific guidance is given.

- Some ALOs have the approach "They do their business, and I do mine."

- Many commented that interaction is the role of the Congressional Liaison Officer or Liaison Officer Director.

- Many believe that the ALO and congressional evaluation processes should remain separate and independent because of their value as a check and balance, in avoiding biases, and in avoiding interference in the other's evaluation process.

- If there is any forced interaction, some believe that problems might occur such as congressional offices' "wanting it now!" which would be perceived by ALOs as rude behavior.

- Some comment that they don't know much about congressional processes, that congressional offices operate with an inner circle, or that congressional offices operate with secrecy.

- Many have had good experiences interacting with congressional offices or serving on their interview boards.

- For some ALOs, the most or only interaction with congressional offices occurs for Academy Days or Nights.

- Some ALOs think it would be good to coordinate more, maybe even share Forms 4060, in order to do a better job of evaluating or determining character.

- However, some believe that congressional staffs do not want ALO interaction.

- A few say that interview boards are too short (5-10 minutes) and that boards don't always know what to look for.

- A couple comment on how interview boards are "softball" events for candidates.

- Some make arguments for greater interaction and service on boards.

- Some comment that congressional staffs could use ALO help due to problems that sometimes exist, such as lack of knowledge or professionalism.

- A few believe that Congressional Liaison Officers are not well trained.

- A few have a misperception that the ALO input to USAFA is valued less than other factors.

20. Question 20—ALO Comments on Measuring and Assessing Applicant Responses to Issues or Questions of Moral Complexity and Character ("Please make any comments you have about how you measure and assess applicant responses to issues or questions of moral complexity and character for your evaluation of applicants to the Air Force Academy.")

- ALOs responded very well to this question. They took more time overall to write longer answers than for questions 18 and 19. Their answers are more passionate. Their answers reflect that they care deeply about assessing character. They think character is extremely important.

- Many comment on how difficult it is to do.

- Many comment on how they confirm the character of candidates by speaking with coaches, teachers, counselors, parents (especially), pastors, employers, Scout leaders, friends, etc. They indicate a strong reliance on this approach.

- Many comment on how candidates have the ability to know what ALOs are looking for in answers and know how to give the "right" answers.

- Many ALOs used the following to describe some of the ways they assess character: feelings, gut feel, intuition, experience, demeanor, judgment call, sincerity of answers, consistency of answers, confidence, eye contact, nonverbal behavior, and body language.

- The following are techniques or approaches ALOs use to assess character:
  - o Spend much time, conduct several interviews, and get to know the candidate.
  - o Ask about the Honor Code and Air Force core values.
  - o Ask probing questions and dig down with follow-up questions.
  - o Examine specific actions, activities, interactions with ALO, how they treat others, associations, interests, and jobs.

- There are two approaches used to elicit answers to questions:
  - o Ask hypothetical questions, situational questions, "what if" questions, and example questions.
  - o Ask behavior-based questions such as "What happened next?" "How did you feel?" and "What were you thinking?"

- One ALO requires candidates to read and respond to an American Legion article written by a cadet about her Honor Code violation and subsequent experiences.

- Some ALOs say that they recognize that 17- to 18-year olds don't have all the answers or experience and that the process should focus the most on developing the character while they are cadets.

- Some ALOs treat favorably candidates who admit flaws but address them and learn from their mistakes.

- Several comment on using the ALO Handbook for guidance and questions. Some believe that the ALO Handbook has weaknesses.

- Several commented on using the "STAR" process to assess character.

- Some ALOs offered constructive suggestions:
  - o USAFA should provide ALOs with more guidelines, definitions, more tools, and information from experts on character.
  - o USAFA should place more emphasis on character in ALO training and pamphlets.
  - o USAFA should change the HR questions on the Form 4060 to questions that are more meaningful in terms of integrity, etc.

o USAFA should conduct background checks and conduct character-specific surveys with three to four people who know candidates well.

21. Question 21—ALO Suggestions for Making Improvements to the Admissions Process ("What suggestions do you have for making improvements to the admissions process for the Air Force Academy, including such areas as the role of and procedures for ALOs, the role and processes of Congressional offices, and the procedures of the Air Force Academy Admissions Office?")

- ALOs offered many very good suggestions.

- Many ALOs suggest that formalized, professional training be provided to them on interviews, standards, questions, expectations, etc.

- A large number of ALOs have the impression from questions on the ALO survey that ALO–congressional office interaction is being promoted by USAFA. Many showed support for greater interaction between these two entities.

- Some request USAFA guidelines on how to improve interactions.

- A few do not understand or value the role of Congressional offices.

- A couple comment that all Members of Congress should conduct interview boards. One pointed out that it is possible for a recruited athlete not to be interviewed by an ALO or Congressional office!

- Many comment on how USAFA is slow to give letters of assurance or acceptance and believe it hurts USAFA recruiting.

- Many want more mandays as compensation for the excessive work they do as ALOs.

- Several suggest there should be less emphasis on SAT or ACT scores and academics and more on leadership, service, and commitment.

- Several say USAFA needs new or updated materials such as DVDs and CDs.

- Many like the use of the ALO website, but they would like it to have more up-to-date information on candidates.

- Several would like recruited athletes to also have to be interviewed.

- Some want feedback on how the ALOs and cadets are doing.

- Some ALOs comment on how overworked they are, and they complain that USAFA should not use a heavy hand against them or fail to respect the work they do.

- There were many comments on the Form 4060: little time to fill it out on some candidates, changing it, improving its use, issues with rankings such as firewalling, and how USAFA should be more willing to accept ALO recommendations that recommend not appointing a candidate.

- One made a passionate statement about how USAFA does not know what it wants to produce and what is most important for the real USAF world of the Global War on Terrorism.
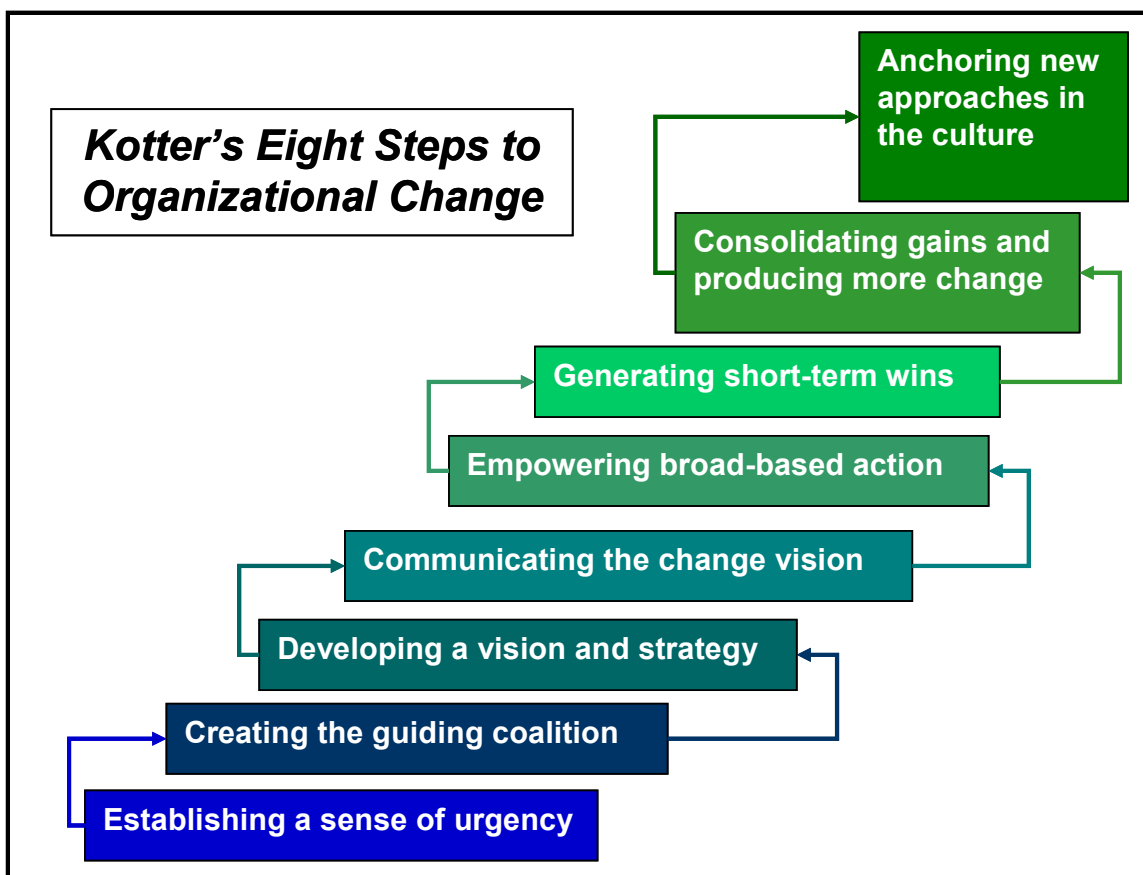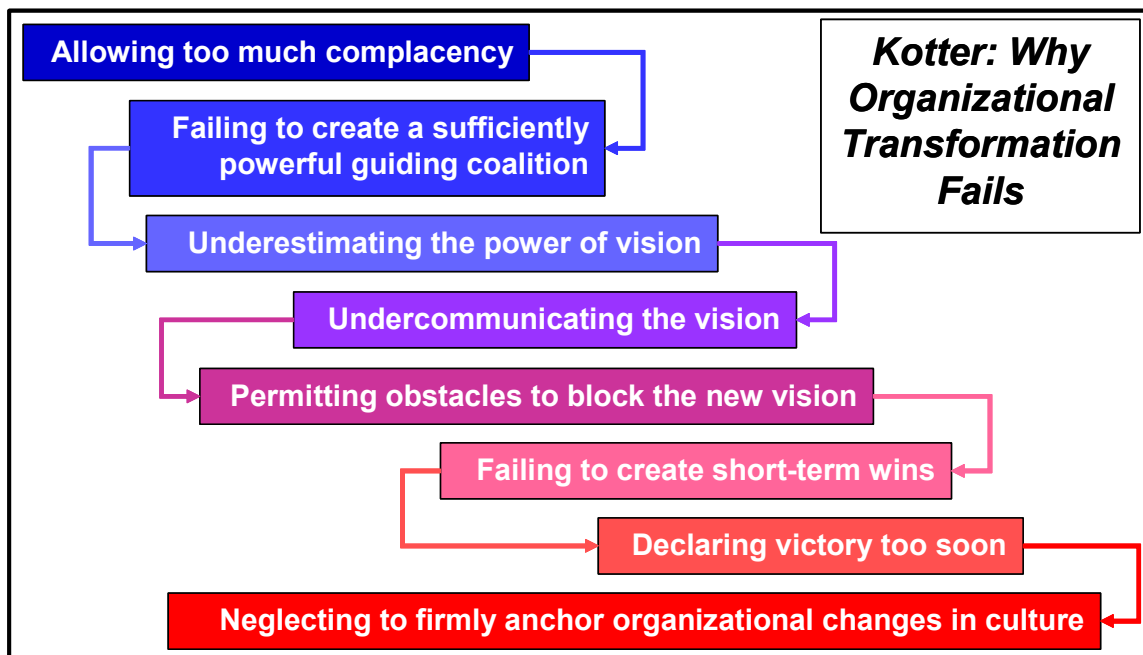
Annex 9: Admissions Liaison Officer (ALO) Survey Results Summary

Annex 10: Models and Frameworks

Kotter's Organizational Change Framework

Effective organizational change: Kotter's findings suggest *eight critical steps* that must be taken for effective organizational change:

1. Establishing a sense of urgency
   - o a. Continuous examining of the operational environment
   - o b. Identify crises, potential crises, and major opportunities

2. Creating the guiding coalition (for example, the leadership team)
   - o a. Selecting the "right" folks
   - o b. Building the leadership team with the "right" to make change happen

3. Developing a vision and strategy
   - o a. Create a vision; constantly revisit it
   - o b. Develop strategies to implement the vision

4. Communicating the change vision
   - o a. Using multiple methods, constantly communicate the vision
   - o b. Guiding coalition role models correct behavior

5. Empowering broad-based action
   - o a. Get rid of obstacles
   - o b. Change systems and structures that undermine the vision
   - o c. Encourage risk taking

6. Generating short-term wins
   - o a. Work hard on "low-hanging fruit"
   - o b. Create quick wins to build momentum
   - o c. Visible rewards for successful performance

7. Consolidating gains and producing more change
   - o a. Use increased credibility to change systems, structures, and policies
   - o b. Hire, promote, and develop the people who can implement the vision
   - o c. Constantly reinvigorate with new projects, etc.

8. Anchoring new approaches in the culture
   - o a. Character and leadership development and succession

Connections between new behavior and organizational success are established and reinforced.

Kotter: Why Organizational Transformation Fails

- Allowing too much complacency
- Failing to create a sufficiently powerful guiding coalition
- Underestimating the power of vision
- Undercommunicating the vision
- Permitting obstacles to block the new vision
- Failing to create short-term wins
- Declaring victory too soon
- Neglecting to firmly anchor organizational changes in culture

Kotter's Eight Steps to Organizational Change

- Anchoring new approaches in the culture
- Consolidating gains and producing more change
- Generating short-term wins
- Empowering broad-based action
- Communicating the change vision
- Developing a vision and strategy
- Creating the guiding coalition
- Establishing a sense of urgency

Schein's Framework for Influencing Organizational Culture

The last step requires that the change be anchored in the culture of the organization. Schein suggests that this step requires a focus on specific *embedding* and *reinforcing* mechanisms to guide the behavior of organizational leaders. These embedding and reinforcing mechanisms are categorized as primary and secondary mechanisms:

Primary

- What leaders *attend to* through communication of their values, priorities, concerns, and their choice of topics to talk about, comment on, reinforce and reward
- How leaders *react to crises*, since its sends powerful messages on values and assumptions
- How leaders *role model* desired behavior, consistent with organizational vision
- How leaders *allocate rewards*
- How leaders *select, reward,* and *fire* subordinates

Secondary

- How leaders *design systems and procedures* that transmit the organizational vision and change initiatives
- How leaders *restructure or redesign the organization* consistent with change requirements, such as hierarchical versus flat structures, and matrix structures
- How leaders *design facilities*, such as office layouts and centers of excellence
- How leaders tell stories and promote myths and legends that engage the emotions of organizational members and inspire motivated, committed behavior
- How leaders *craft formal statements* of policy

Edgar Schein Influencing Organizational Culture

React to Critical Incidents

Reward Criteria

Leadership Actions/Behaviors

Role Model/Coach

Attention, Measurement, Control

Selection/Recruitment Criteria

Organizational Design and Structure

Physical Layout

Organizational Reinforcement

Formal Statements

Systems/Procedures

Stories, Legends, Myths

Individual Development Model

Individual Development

TIME

REFLECTION

FEEDBACK

INDIVIDUAL READINESS

EXPERIENCE

COACHING

MENTORING
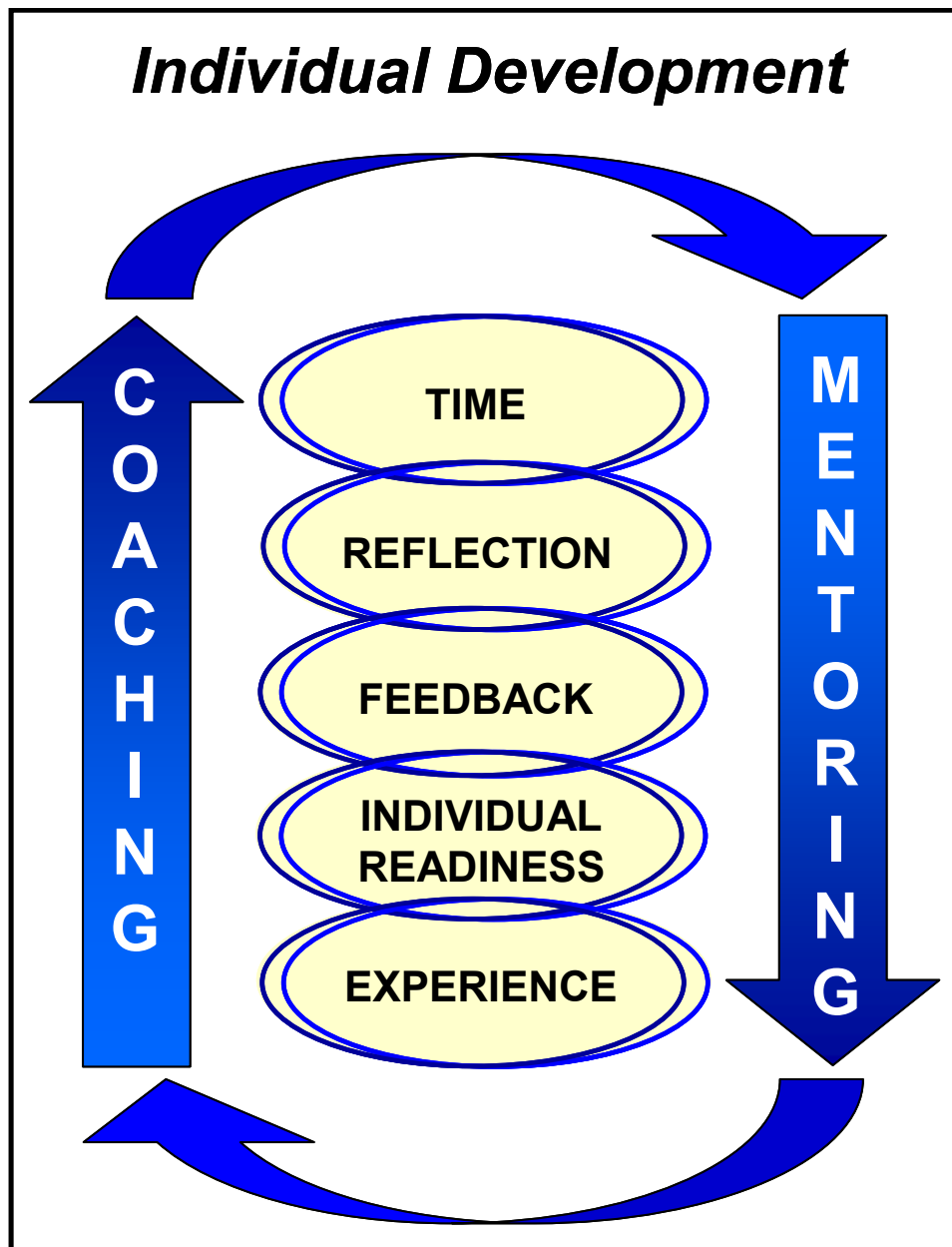
Leader of Character Development Programs

Based on our understanding of leader development, through reading, research, benchmarking, and many conversations with experts in the field over the years, the following outline is what emerges as the *guiding principles* of leader development and the *components* of an effective leader development program.

Guiding Principles

1. Organizations that are committed to leader development are characterized by having *"teachable points of view"*[104] and understand that the development of others is essential to the long-term health and success of the organization. And, development is not just for those with high potential (although successful programs do develop those with high potential), but development of all organizational members, at some level, is seen as important.

2. Solid programs are based on a *competency model* built around the organization's business strategy (what they are trying to achieve), and this model forms the basis for a 360 assessment and feedback processes.

3. The programs have *great managerial and leadership support*, particularly from senior management, that manifests itself in coaching, mentoring initiatives, and effective feedback processes.

4. Systematic, *ongoing education and training* components in the leader development. Not a one-time shot, but an embedded process.

5. Programs focus at *three levels of analysis*: individual development, team development, and development that focuses on the organization.

6. Programs are grounded in *action learning*, ensuring that what is done is related directly to the organization's business—for example, working on real problems and issues and developing real solutions. This consideration, along with #4, creates the conditions for *ownership* on the part of the individual.

Components of Development

1. Based on a *diagnosis*—for example, a "gap" analysis—where the development program is, compared to where it needs to be based on the requirements of ODS.

2. Elaborate and embedded *assessment processes* for individuals and teams that produce *developmental plans* and *actions*.

3. Program design, built around required competencies, based on *action learning* (for example, focused on real problems, real solutions that matter in the workplace) as the centerpiece, which is progressive, sequential, and integrated across all levels of analysis in the organization. In this phase, activities such as *reflective journaling* are critical for accountability and ownership.

- Implementation.

- On-the-job support through community of practice (for example, coaching, mentoring and feedback).

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[104] Concept developed by Noel Tichy and Eli Cohen in *The Leadership Engine*.

- Program evaluation—did it matter? These are the common dimensions of effective assessment:
  - o Initial reaction evaluations (emotional/feeling response)
  - o Learning evaluations
  - o Behavioral evaluations (participants behaving differently at work?)
  - o Results evaluation (achievement of designated outcomes)

Annex 10: Models and Frameworks

Annex 11: Working Group Report Excerpts

"The Report of the Working Group Concerning the Deterrence of and Response to Incidents of Sexual Assault at the Air Force Academy"

IX. Areas Recommended for Further Study

In the course of conducting this review, the Working Group encountered a number of areas that were beyond the scope of our activities or for which time did not allow adequate study, and did not result in specific recommendations, but merit further study and, potentially, recommendations for command action. They are listed below.

1. The Extent to Which Academy Processes Differ from Air Force Processes. There are many aspects of cadet life that are different from ordinary Air Force life. Among them are the cadet disciplinary process, cadet performance evaluations, and cadet rules of conduct. Some interviews suggested that the Academy processes in some respects train cadets to be cadets, rather than to be officers. It seems worthwhile to critically examine the entire cadet experience using as a measure the extent to which any given process differs from Air Force processes or standards, the degree to which that is justified, and whether the justification warrants continuation of the difference. A related analysis would be whether, to the extent the differences are warranted, they should be continued throughout the cadet experience or whether they should be exchanged for Air Force processes as the cadet progresses in the cadet career. (See, among other sources, the interview of Maj Gen (sel) Welsh, former Commandant.)

2. Review for Commissioning Suitability. The Academy's Character Development Review Panel, in its July 2002 report, noted the panel members' belief that there are identifiable cadets who, although not necessarily in overt difficulty have persistent negative or marginal attitudes or behavior that may not suit them for commissioning. The panel suggested implementation of processes to screen cadets for commissioning suitability before they move from the sophomore year to the junior year and incur a service commitment. Lieutenant General Hosmer's interview also reflected the need to review cadets for worthiness of commissioning in the final year. Consider implementation of this concept, as well as other measures to ensure that cadets meet the highest standards for commissioning. In doing so, consider making distinctions between suitability for commissioning and graduation, allowing greater discretion in awarding a degree where commissioning may nonetheless be inappropriate, and declining to commission the cadet.

3. Fourth-Class System. Consideration of the viability and utility of the Fourth-Class cadet/ "doolie" training approach in present times may be warranted. Questions include whether the current system is the one best suited to prepare cadets to be officers; whether the duration of the "doolie" period is too long or could be shortened to good effect; and whether treatment of cadets during the "doolie" period should be modified. In doing so, consideration of the processes in effect at the other Service academies, civilian military academies, as well as Air Force Basic Military Training, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, and Officer Training School may

be of value. In addition, consider giving greater freedom to make decisions (and mistakes) to more senior cadets in order to enable them to demonstrate responsibility (or lack thereof) for suitability of commissioning.

4. Preparatory School. The Working Group did not examine the status or processes pertinent to sexual assault at the Academy Preparatory School. A separate examination by the Academy would be well advised to ensure that lessons learned are carried over to that environment.

5. Interface of the Athletic Department with the Training Wing. In the course of our inquiry, we received repeated comments regarding perceptions of different standards for intercollegiate athletes and inconsistencies between adherence to cadet rules in the athletic areas and in areas under the Training Wing. While the *Agenda for Change* places the Athletic Department under the Training Wing, this aspect of treatment of athletes versus other cadets remains worthy of further study, including ways to communicate to cadets and other Academy personnel the facts relevant to any justifiable differences, as perceptions alone can undermine the effectiveness of the cadet training environment. We note that an on-going General Accounting Office study expected in September 2003 may be of assistance.

6. Relative Tours of Duty of Senior Leadership. In recent years, Commandants have served one to three years in the position, while the Athletic Director and the Dean have been in place for many more. The extent to which the dissimilar periods of longevity impact relations between the mission areas, and any "asymmetric disadvantage" this may produce for the interests of the Training Wing, as well as the turbulence frequent rotations of the Commandant produce for the other mission areas, appear to merit consideration.

7. Faculty Members. There is some concern that some faculty members at the Academy may not understand the need to treat females in an equal manner and that some faculty members may adopt an academic attitude that is not consistent with training military officers. The selection, orientation, and retention of faculty should be examined to assure they are contributing to the goals of the Academy and the Air Force in the training of tomorrow's officers.

8. Character Evaluations of Prospective Cadets. It appeared from superficial inquiry that the Academy's means of assessing the character and suitability for military life and future commissioning of prospective cadets during the admissions process are somewhat limited, and turn largely on limited interviews by Academy liaisons. Whether this is an issue, and if so the means by which it may be addressed (including the usefulness of psychological testing) warrants further inquiry.

9. Security Forces Involvement in Cadet Security. Assess the adequacy of Security Forces involvement in the cadet area.

10. Other Commissioning Sources. We recognized when the study began that there is a need to examine sexual assault issues at the other Air Force commissioning sources (Officer Training School and Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps). This remains to be done, and should be done.

11. Board of Visitors. The Board of Visitors consisting of members of the Senate and House of Representatives, as well as Presidential appointees, constituted by 10 U.S.C. § 9355, is charged with inquiring into morale, discipline, and other matters at the Academy. A brief review of information provided to that Board since 1993 indicates that an examination of the means of keeping the Board informed, particularly on matters related to sexual assault, may be warranted.

12. Air Force Headquarters. Consider to what extent the Headquarters Air Force has been and should be involved in the oversight of the sexual assault and sexual harassment issues in the Air Force, including the Academy.

Annex 11: Working Group Report Excerpts

Annex 12: Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACES	Academy Character Enrichment Seminars
ACSC	Air Command and Staff College
AD	Director of Athletics
AETC	Air Education and Training Command
AFI	Air Force Instruction
AFOATS	Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools
AFROTC	Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps
AFSC	Air Force Specialty Code
ANSER	Analytic Services Inc.
AOC	Air Officer Commanding
AOG	Association of Graduates
ALO	Admissions Liaison Officer
AMT	Academy Military Training leader
ARC	Academic Review Committee
ATP	Academy Training Philosophy
AU	Air University
AY	Academic Year
BCT	Basic Cadet Training
CCD	Center for Character Development
CCL	Center for Creative Leadership
CEMU	Commissioning Education Memorandum of Understanding
CLDS	Cadet Leadership Development System
CLO	Congressional Liaison Officer
CS	commissioning suitability
CST	Combat Survival Training
CTEC	Commissioning Training and Education Committee
DF	Department of Faculty organizations
DFBL	Department of Behavioral Sciences and Leadership
DIT	Defining Issues Test
DRU	Direct Reporting Unit
FCS	Four Class System
GPA	grade point average
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HQ/AF	Headquarters United States Air Force
ILDP	Individual Leader Development Plan
KSA	knowledge, skills, and abilities

Annex 12: Abbreviations and Acronyms

LAS	Leadership Attributes Survey
LGM	Leadership Growth Model
LIFT	Leaders in Flight Today seminars
LIU	Long Island University
LOA	Letters of Admonishment
LOC	Letter of Counseling
LOD	Liaison Officer Director
LOR	Letter of Reprimand
MAJCOM	Major Command
MPA	Military Performance Average
MRC	Military Review Committee
MTL	Military Training Leader
NCO	noncommissioned officer
OASB	Officer Aptitude Screening Board
ODS	Officer Development System
OML	Order of Merit List
OPA	Overall Performance Average
OTS	Officer Training School
PDP	Professional Development Portfolio
PE	physical education
PEA	Physical Education Average
PERC	Physical Education Review Committee
PITO	Personal, Interpersonal, Team, Organizational Development Framework
PML	Professional Military Learning
R&R	Respect and Responsibility seminars
RD	Regional Director
RSVP	Respecting the Spiritual Values of Persons
SECAF	Secretary of the Air Force
STRC	Summer Training Review Committee
TOEP	Tactical Officer Education Program
TRW	34th Training Wing
UCCS	University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
UCMJ	Uniform Code of Military Justice
USAF	United States Air Force
USAFA	United States Air Force Academy
USMA	United States Military Academy
USNA	United States Naval Academy
VECTOR	Virtual Effective Character Through Observation and Reflection seminars
WHB	Wing Honor Board

Annex 12: Abbreviations and Acronyms

XP (USAFA)	Directorate of Plans and Programs
XPC (USAFA)	Directorate of Plans and Programs Culture and Climate Division
XPL (USAFA)	Directorate of Plans and Programs Leadership and Development Division

Annex 12: Abbreviations and Acronyms

Annex 13: Acknowledgements

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- Lt Col Danny Miller, AFSLMO
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- Brig Gen Dana Born, Dean, USAFA
- Brig Gen Johnny Weida, Commandant, USAFA
- Dr. Hans Mueh, Athletic Director, USAFA
- Col (ret) Dave French, SAF/MRM
- Maj Ken Stoltman, DFBL
- Gen (ret) Patrick Gamble, Former USAFA Commandant
- COL Barney Forsythe, USMA
- Maj. Bill Collins, USMC

Annex 13: Acknowledgements

Annex 14: Places and People

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1. Mr. Dominguez (SAF/MR)
2. Brig Gen Bill Chambers, AF/DPL
3. Col (ret) Dave French (SAF/MRM)
4. Lt Col George Ramey, et al, AF/DPLAP
5. Ms. Shiela Earle, OSD R&R
6. Mr. Steve Wagner, AF/DPX
7. Col Gamble, AF/DPXF
8. Col Mike Carney, USAFA/OCL and Superintendent's liaison to HQ/AF
9. Lt Col Paul Price (AF/DPLA)
10. Ms. Kelly Craven (SAF/MRM)

USAFA Senior Leadership

- Lt Gen John Rosa, Superintendent
- Brig Gen Dana Born, Dean
- Brig Gen Johnny Weida, Commandant
- Dr. Hans Mueh, Athletic Director

Staff, Offices and Personnel From USAFA

- Admissions Office
- Center for Character Development
- 34th Training Group
- XP—Integration Office
- Chaplains
- AOCs
- NCOs
- Cadet Counseling Center
- Faculty (Focus Groups)
- Coaches (Focus Groups)

- Cadet (Focus Groups)
- The Prep School

Other Institutions, People, etc.

- 17 Congressional Staff Office *(see Annex 3)*
- Maxwell AFB
  - o ROTC
  - o OTS
  - o AFOATS
  - o XP
  - o Faculty
  - o Students
- West Point
  - o Commandant
  - o Director of Admissions
  - o Center for Professional Military Ethic
  - o Plans, Programs and Analysis Office
  - o Department of Military Instruction
  - o TOPE Program Office
  - o Constitutional Research Office
  - o Faculty
  - o Cadets
- U.S. Naval Academy
  - o Commandant
  - o Director of Admissions
  - o Center for Character Development
  - o Leadership, Ethics and Law Department
  - o Director of Institutional Research
  - o TOPE Program Office
- U.S. Coast Guard Academy
  - o Commandant
- U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
  - o Superintendent
  - o Director of Center for Character and Ethics

- University of Minnesota

- Center for Creative Leadership

- AFSLMO

- Harvard Business School

  o Professor of Organization Theory

- Gen (ret) Patrick Gamble, Former USAFA Commandant

Annex 14: Places and People

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